



# 5-Year Strategic Plan 2018-2023



**Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon**

*Celebrating 25 years of Active, Healthy Living through Recreation and Parks*

# 5-Year Strategic Plan 2018-2023

We envision a Yukon where recreation and parks are essential and integral to quality of life; where all citizens engage in recreation experiences that contribute to physical, mental and social well-being; and where recreation connects people to their communities and outdoor environments.

We believe Recreation:

- ★ Enhances mental and physical wellbeing.
- ★ Enhances social wellbeing.
- ★ Helps build strong families and communities.
- ★ Helps people connect with nature.
- ★ Provides economic benefits through investments in recreation.



We are grounded in our values of:

- ★ Lifelong Participation & Connection
- ★ Inclusion & Accessibility
- ★ Community-Based Leadership
- ★ Relationships & Partnerships

*RPAY strengthens the capacity of Yukon communities to engage their citizens in active, healthy lifestyles through recreation and parks.*

We implement our plan by being:

- ★ Strategic
- ★ Sensitive
- ★ Sustainable

**Goal #1**  
Influence attitudes around the benefits of active living, recreation and parks for health and wellbeing.

**Goal #2**  
Support active, accessible, inclusive, and culturally-relevant recreation experiences that encourage lifelong, winter, and rural Yukon participation..

**Goal #3**  
Strengthen community-based recreation leadership through training, certification and professional development for practitioners and volunteers.

**Goal #4**  
Operate effectively and efficiently using sound business practices and partnerships to foster sustainability.

*Active, healthy living through recreation and parks*



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RPAY Board, Staff &  
Stakeholders



# 2018-2023 Strategic Plan

## Our Slogan

Active, healthy living through recreation and parks

## Our Vision

We envision a Yukon where recreation and parks are essential and integral to quality of life; where all citizens engage in recreation experiences that contribute to physical, mental and social wellbeing; and where recreation connects people to their communities and outdoor environments.

## Our Mission

We strengthen the capacity of Yukon communities to engage their citizens in active, healthy lifestyles through recreation and parks.

## Our Beliefs

We believe in the Benefits of Recreation as stated in the 2015 Framework for Recreation in Canada. Recreation:

- Enhances mental and physical wellbeing.
- Enhances social wellbeing.
- Helps build strong families and communities.
- Helps people connect with nature.
- Provides economic benefits through investments in recreation.

## Our Values

We ground our decisions and actions in our values. We value:

- **Lifelong Participation** in recreation, arts, culture, and an active lifestyle; and **Lifelong Connections** to nature, parks and trails.
- **Inclusion and Accessibility** to address the unique needs of rural and First Nation communities, and to make it easier for all Yukoners, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or means, to engage in meaningful recreation experiences.
- **Community-Based Leadership** that strengthens the capacity of our practitioners and volunteers to provide meaningful recreation experiences.
- **Relationships and Partnerships** necessary to support community-driven recreation.

## Our Operating Principles

We ensure our principles are reflected in our annual work plans. We will be:

- **Strategic** by considering current trends, responding to national and territorial priorities<sup>1</sup>, and maintaining strong partnerships within the field and across sectors.
- **Sensitive** by reflecting the diversity and uniqueness of community, culture and environment in all activities, programs and operations.
- **Sustainable** by strengthening organizational security and efficiency, by streamlining operations, and by focusing on what is working well.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, address mental health through recreation, support reconciliation and the TRC's Calls for Action, increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour, connect people to nature, etc.

## Our Goals

### 1) Influence attitudes around the benefits of active living, recreation and parks for health and wellbeing.

We:

- a) Build the case for recreation as an essential service for an active and healthy population.
- b) Share information, resources and key messages about the benefits of recreation and an active lifestyle through our website and social media.
- c) Encourage connections with nature through the use of parks, trails and the outdoors for physical and mental health.
- d) Package our core recreation programs and services to emphasize the personal and social benefits of participation.

We work towards Goal #1 through activities such as:

- ★ Website and social media
- ★ Promotional items
- ★ Newsletters, blogs and success stories
- ★ Presentations and resources

### 2) Support active, accessible, inclusive, and culturally-relevant recreation experiences that encourage lifelong, winter, and rural Yukon participation.

We:

- a) Target school-aged kids and youth, during and after school, through programs and resources that encourage daily physical activity.
- b) Encourage Winter Active for Life (WAFL) by introducing low-cost, non-motorized, outdoor activities and providing access to equipment loans.
- c) Expand active recreation opportunities in rural and First Nations communities through the RHEAL<sup>2</sup> Leader program.
- d) Encourage Yukoners to walk and cycle more, and to integrate active transportation into their daily lives for personal, societal and environmental benefit.

We work towards Goal #2 through programs such as:

- ★ Rural Healthy Eating Active Living (RHEAL) Leaders
- ★ Active Yukon Schools
- ★ Winter Active for Life (WAFL) Equipment Lending Library
- ★ Cycle Smart
- ★ Nordic Walking

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<sup>2</sup> RHEAL is an acronym for rural healthy eating active living and evolved from the Rural Active Living Coordinator program established in 2001.

**3) Strengthen community-based, recreation leadership through training, certification and professional development for practitioners and volunteers.**

We:

- a) Provide training opportunities for youth and adults focused on developing 13 foundational competencies<sup>3</sup> of recreation leadership.
- b) Offer (on a pre-determined cycle and dependent upon available resources) the essential, industry-specific certifications required to lead recreation programs and operate recreation facilities.
- c) Facilitate professional development and networking to keep current Yukon practitioners motivated and engaged.
- d) Implement strategies that reduce barriers to recreation training for rural and First Nation communities, emerging leaders, and community volunteers.

We work towards Goal #3 through initiatives such as:

- ★ Recreation North's Community Recreation Leadership Program
- ★ Rural Recreation Retreat and Annual Recreation Gathering
- ★ Spring Aquatics Workshop and Yukon Pool School
- ★ Nordic Walking, Fitness or RHEAL Leader training
- ★ Yukon Community Recreation Leaders Guide
- ★ Canadian Playground Safety Institute certification

**4) Operate effectively and efficiently using sound business practices and partnerships to foster sustainability.**

We:

- a) Strengthen governance practices through Board development and engagement, review of the constitution and policies, and effective Board–Staff communications.
- b) Operate efficiently using accepted fiscal management processes, following generally accepted accounting principles, developing relevant policies, and sustaining adequate levels of funding.
- c) Work with key stakeholders and funders to maximize resources and achieve our goals.
- d) Implement human resource practices that reflect staffing priorities; succession planning; enable professional development; make achieving organizational goals easy; and recognize staff, contractors and Board members.
- e) Network, represent, communicate and coordinate within the recreation field and across multiple sectors at local, territorial and national levels.
- f) Participate in shared leadership of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and further the goals of the 2015 Framework for Recreation in Canada.

We work towards Goal #4 through strategies such as:

- ★ Board recruitment, orientation and engagement
- ★ Operational policies and guidelines
- ★ Professional development of staff
- ★ Representation at the national level (e.g., ParticipACTION, ALACAD, CTF)

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<sup>3</sup> The Yukon Community Recreation Leaders Guide identifies these competencies. This model was used to develop Recreation North's Community Recreation Leadership Program.

## Appendix A: Celebrating 25 Years; From 1993 to 2018

On January 6, 1984 the “Parks and Recreation Association of the Yukon” was registered in the Yukon Territory by the Deputy Registrar of Companies. The new association eventually disbanded until April 19, 1993 when the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY) was formally registered with Yukon’s Registrar of Societies.

The need for a territorial association representing recreation and parks emerged during the Breaking Trails Recreation Conference in the early 1990’s. This conference brought government, community groups, First Nations, and recreation practitioners together. The Benefits of Recreation<sup>4</sup> had just been launched to encourage the field to shift towards an outcomes-based rather than needs-focused approach. In 1993, these two factors influenced the creation and incorporation of the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon as a non-profit society.

In the early years, RPAY’s primary mandate was to support community recreation in partnership with Yukon Government (YG) Sport and Recreation Branch. This was accomplished by hosting a spring and fall conference, and by supporting and delivering training to rural Yukon pools and aquatics staff.

In the 1990’s, federal, provincial and territorial discussions led to the emergence of active living as a construct to address increasing concerns regarding poor health. Through the Yukon Active Living Strategy, Yukon Government endorsed its active living stance in 2001. The Strategy supports, among other things, the Active Living Coordinator position housed at RPAY. A committed position shifted the focus of RPAY’s priorities towards active recreation and programming delivered through four settings (individuals, schools, workplaces and communities). Canada’s Population Health Initiative and territorial support led to the development and delivery of a variety of active living programs; some of which continue today (Active Yukon Schools and RHEAL<sup>5</sup> Leaders).

Around 2002, the federal government increased health prevention efforts through its five-year Canadian Diabetes Strategy. In partnership with Health Canada, RPAY expanded its focus from active living to include the promotion of healthy lifestyles through physical activity, healthy eating and stress reduction. Partnerships with the Diabetes Education Centre and YG Health and Social Services supported delivery of the Chronic Conditions Self-Management Program and complemented existing partnerships. RPAY scaled-up operations adding staff and contractors. Active Rx and On-the-Right-Path programs emerged around 2002.

When Canadian Diabetes Strategy and Population Health funding ended, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) entered into a bilateral agreement with Yukon to continue healthy living programming. In response, RPAY expanded its focus to include healthy eating in 2009. This saw the Rural Active Living Coordinator program develop into the RHEAL Leader program. In an effort to engage rural communities, the annual recreation conference became the Healthy Living Retreat.

In 2010, with escalating concerns around childhood obesity and decreased levels of physical activity, F/P/T<sup>6</sup> governments prioritized programming that would take place during the after-school time period (ASTP). Shortly afterwards, the territorial government renewed the Yukon Active Living Strategy (2012). Then, in 2014, YG Sport and Recreation Branch signed a Yukon Northern Wellness Project agreement with PHAC.

Over the past five years, other priorities have emerged to support an active and healthy population. An emphasis on reducing sedentary behaviour encourages Canadians to move more without worrying about the quality or quantity of their physical activity. Physical literacy is essential to healthy development; it fosters confidence and competence to be active over the lifespan. Mental health, now more prominent in public policy; is positively impacted through participation in recreation and physical activity. The TRC’s<sup>7</sup> Calls to Action encourage recreation practitioners and volunteers to consider how recreation can advance reconciliation.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://benefitshub.ca/>

<sup>5</sup> rural healthy eating active living

<sup>6</sup> federal, provincial and territorial

<sup>7</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission



During this time, the recreation field celebrated a milestone. In 2015, governments and associations endorsed a Framework for Recreation in Canada. The Framework provides renewed direction through goals and priorities that deliver the benefits of recreation. RPAY worked to ensure the Framework addressed “rural and remote” settings.

As a key delivery partner for federal and territorial priorities, RPAY’s focus now places a greater emphasis on:

- Rural communities through the RHEAL Leader program which is about more than just physical activity or fitness. This program has been shown to bring together communities and to help individuals feel less secluded, depressed and lonely.
- Winter Active for Life through outdoor, non-motorized, winter programs that include an equipment lending library<sup>8</sup> which annually benefits more than 10 communities.
- Daily physical activity for children and youth during and after school facilitated by an Active Yukon Kids and Youth (ALSAKY) Coordinator and including Playground Leadership, Cycle Smart, and Classroom, Teen and After School Action Grants<sup>9</sup>.
- Healthy lifestyles that include healthy eating and physical activity through the Healthy Living Menu<sup>9</sup> of workshops, a project in partnership with CACO<sup>10</sup>, and support for healthy snacks<sup>11</sup> for RHEAL Leader programs.
- Strengthening leadership and capacity for community recreation through training and annual events (e.g., aquatics, recreation gathering). With support from YG Sport and Recreation Branch, two resources, Yukon Community Recreation Leaders Guide and Yukon Community Recreation Planning Toolkit, were developed. RPAY as a member of Recreation North—a tri-territorial partnership—won the prestigious Arctic Inspiration Prize in 2015 to develop and pilot the Community Recreation Leadership Program.

After 25 years, and regardless of the priorities, policies or trends that have shifted and emerged, the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon remains dedicated to empowering Yukon people and communities to adopt active, healthy lifestyles. RPAY works with partners across multiple sectors at community, territorial and national levels. However, none of this good work would have been possible without dedicated commitment, encouragement, and operational funding from YG Sport and Recreation Branch.

To conclude, it is appropriate to wish RPAY a Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

#### NOTE:

Renewal of RPAY’s strategic plan began in October 2017. The 2018-2023 strategic plan was approved by the Board in May 2018.

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<sup>8</sup> Thanks to Yukon Lotteries

<sup>9</sup> The Action Grant program and Healthy Living Menu ended in March 2017

<sup>10</sup> Collaborative Action on Childhood Obesity

<sup>11</sup> Thanks to YG Health Promotion Unit



## Appendix B: The Benefits of Recreation and Parks

RPAY believes that personal and community engagement in recreation and parks provides many benefits which positively impact the health of individuals, communities and our environment. Recreation and parks are essential services in our communities and participation is a right of all citizens regardless of gender, ethnicity, income status or ability. Opportunities to participate, and environments which encourage participation, must respect local values and traditions. An effective territorial system of recreation and parks requires the support from all levels of government and community leaders. When recreation and parks are delivered as an essential service, benefits to Yukon people and communities will follow.

According to the Framework for Recreation in Canada, evidence on the benefits of recreation and exposure to nature suggest that recreation and parks can address existing challenges with policies and practices that:

- Enhance mental and physical wellbeing.
- Enhance social wellbeing.
- Help build strong families and communities.
- Help people connect with nature.
- Provide economic benefits by investing in recreation.

These statements are consistent with the Benefits of Recreation developed in 1992 and described on the National Benefits Hub.<sup>12</sup>

- Recreation, sport, arts, culture and parks are essential to personal health. Active Living is a key determinant of health status.
- Recreation, active living, sport, arts, culture and parks are key to balanced human development helping Canadians reach for their potential.
- Recreation, active lifestyles, fitness, sport, arts, culture, parks and trails are essential to quality of life and place.
- Recreation, sport, arts and outdoor pursuits reduce self-destructive and anti-social behaviour.
- Recreation, sport, active living, arts, culture and parks build strong families and healthy communities.
- Recreation, active lifestyles, sport, arts, culture and parks reduce health care, social service, and police/justice costs!
- Recreation, sport, art, culture and parks are significant economic generators in Yukon.
- Parks, open spaces, and natural areas are 'greenspace' essential to wellbeing and our environmental and ecological survival.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://benefitshub.ca/the-benefit-messages/>

## Appendix C: Strategic Plan Terms

This section lists some of the terms used in the strategic plan and in the field of recreation. Unless otherwise noted, terminology is consistent with the Framework for Recreation in Canada.<sup>13</sup>

**Accessible and Inclusive** implies barrier-free opportunities to participate in recreation regardless of sociodemographic factors or ability.

**Active for Life** refers to a lifelong pattern of participating in active recreation and daily physical activity. Active for Life encourages people to choose activities in which they can participate independently at any time, any place and at any age. **Winter Active for Life** emphasizes the importance of being active outdoors in the winter.

**Active Living** involves valuing and integrating physical activity into daily routines. Active living is one component of a healthy lifestyle.

**Active transportation** refers to any form of human-powered transportation such as walking, cycling, using a wheelchair, snowshoeing.<sup>14</sup>

**Health** is “a state of complete physical, social and mental wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”.<sup>15</sup>

**Infrastructure** includes construction, maintenance, repair, operation, and supervision of facilities and outdoor areas. **Indoor spaces and places** can include arenas and pools, community or cultural centres, senior and youth centres, libraries, schools, museums and art galleries, etc. **Outdoor spaces and places** can include parks, playing fields, playgrounds, trails and greenbelts, outdoor pools and rinks, gardens and greenhouses, golf courses and ski hills, etc.

**Physical literacy** is the ability of an individual to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person.<sup>16</sup>

**Public recreation** is the provision of recreation services by governments and non-governmental groups and organizations for the benefit of individuals and communities.

**Recreation** is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing. Recreation is an umbrella term for recreation and parks, as well as recreational activities in physical activity, sport, arts, culture and heritage.

The **recreation field and system** includes stakeholders and providers from the not-for-profit, private and public sectors; including volunteers, paid staff, community groups, educators, researchers, organizations and governments that work collectively to enhance individual and community wellbeing through recreation.

**Spaces** are areas or expanses that are deliberately designed or occur naturally (e.g., the Bush, the Land, the water). Spaces integrate people with nature and with each other, increase socialization, and invite increased physical activity. **Places** are parts of these spaces such as a building, structure, or location (e.g., skate park).

**Wellbeing** refers to the presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression, focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards, robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access to and participation in recreation and culture.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [www.cpra.ca/about-the-framework](http://www.cpra.ca/about-the-framework)

<sup>14</sup> [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/at-ta-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/at-ta-eng.php)

<sup>15</sup> WHO: Constitution 1948 at [www.who.int/governance/eb/who\\_constitution\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who_constitution_en.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> [canadiansporttourism.com/sites/default/files/docs/csp2012\\_en\\_lr.pdf](http://canadiansporttourism.com/sites/default/files/docs/csp2012_en_lr.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing](http://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing)