



CITY OF WICHITA
PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING
PROCESS

CONSERVATION, ACTIVIST, & USER FOCUS GROUP

FEBRUARY 16, 2007

On February 16, representatives from a variety of groups, including users, activists and conservationists were gathered to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for parks and recreation in Wichita from the particular view point of the groups they represent. From a conservationist perspective, the primary benefit of an effective parks system is maintaining people's connection to the earth, thereby enhancing both physical and mental well-being. In an urban setting, parks often serve both recreational and educational purposes, keeping residents in touch with environmental processes and concerns. Several strategies could improve Wichita residents' access to these benefits, including:

- Raising the priority of parks and recreation in the City and community
- Striving for equity in facilities and funding
- Raising public awareness of parks with added publicity and special events, such as concerts
- Facilitating the many existing volunteer efforts
- Setting up community gardens throughout Wichita

More generally, users represented at the focus group had some ideas about improvements to facilities and policies, including:

- Obtaining long-term commitments from public and private partners
- Developing a clear and consistent policy for facilities dedicated to one user group
- Improving connectivity through more continuous pathways
- Supporting bicycling as a transportation alternative, including adding bike racks to all parks