

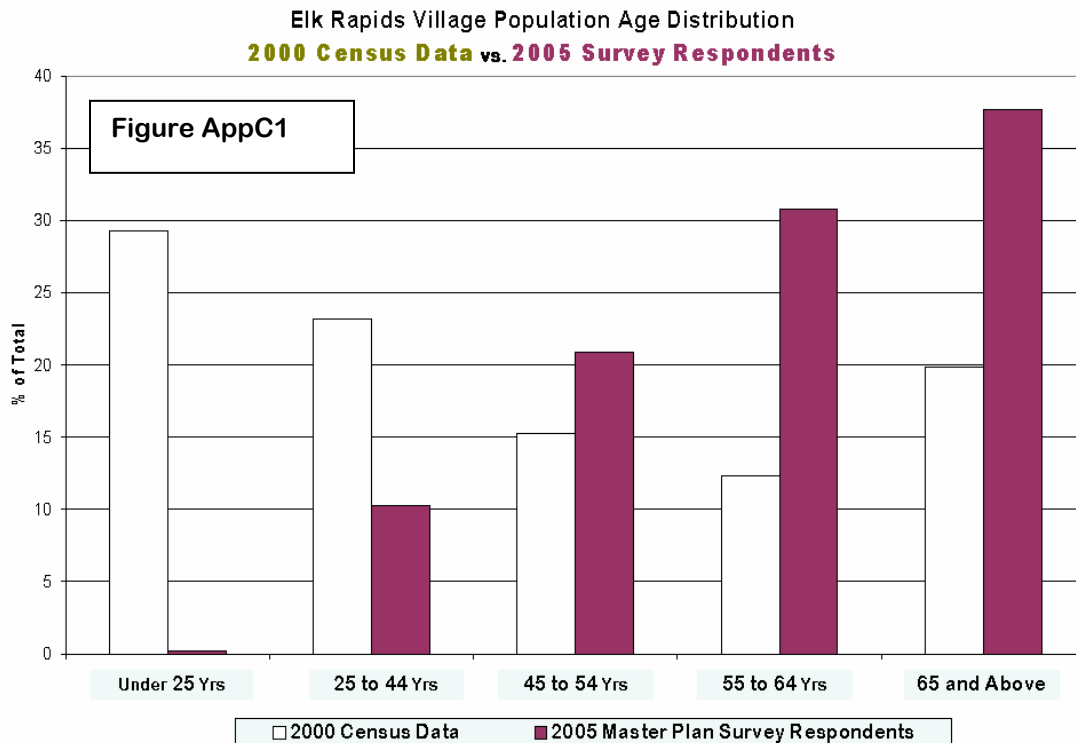
Appendix C. Youth (Elementary School) Survey

1. Need for a Youth Survey

The 2005 Elk Rapids Master Plan Opinion Survey yielded a wealth of information on respondents' attitudes and thoughts on recreational facilities for Elk Rapids. However, it became apparent to the Parks & Recreation Commission that this data may not be completely representative of all residents of Elk Rapids.

Analysis of the demographics of the respondents of the Opinion Survey indicated that two-thirds of the respondents were aged 55 or higher, with over 37% of the respondents aged 65 and above. In contrast, the 2000 Census showed that two-thirds of the residents of the Village of Elk Rapids were aged 54 or under. See Figure AppC1 below.

To obtain the views of younger populations, the Parks & Recreation Commission executed a Youth Survey. In this survey, a questionnaire (see Section 6 of this Appendix) was distributed to



the families of elementary school children in the two Elk Rapids Area Elementary Schools, namely Lakeland (Elk Rapids) and Mill Creek (Williamsburg). Parents were encouraged to work together with their children in filling out this questionnaire. Of the 360 questionnaires distributed, 96 were returned for a somewhat disappointing response rate of 26.7%.

The survey consisted of four questions. The first queried respondents on the frequency of area park usage by their families. The second asked them which parks they used more often. The third question asked respondents to choose from a list of activities in which they participate at the parks. The final question asked respondents to list additional programs, facilities, equipment, activities they would like to see offered at the area parks. Results are summarized below.

2. Area Park Usage Frequency

Question 1. As weather permits, how often would you say that your family or children use area parks?

(% of total respondents)

	Overall	Lakeland	Mill Creek
Daily	26%	29%	18%
Weekly	52%	53%	51%
Monthly	16%	15%	20%
Not Much	5%	3%	9%
Never	1%	0%	2%

This question revealed that nearly 80% of families use the area parks at least once a week, while over a quarter of the families use the parks daily. Clearly the area parks play a major role in the life of young families in the Elk Rapids School District.

3. Which Parks Are Used Most Frequently?

Question 2. If used on a regular basis, which park(s) do you most often visit?

(% of respondents claiming use)

	Overall	Lakeland	Mill Creek
Veterans Memorial Park	87%	94%	73%
The Power Dam Beach	49%	55%	36%
Milton Township Park	30%	41%	7%
Whitewater Township Park	26%	11%	56%
Lakeland School	23%	32%	2%
Torch Lake Township Park	21%	27%	7%
Mill Creek School	18%	4%	49%
County Day Park	18%	19%	16%
Palmer/Shah/Wilcox Natural Area	7%	8%	4%
Rotary Park	4%	4%	2%

Overall, the Veterans Memorial Park was the overwhelming favorite (87%) of the respondents. This was followed by the Power Dam Beach (49%), formed behind the Elk Rapids Harbor

breakwater to the north of Elk River and the Power Dam. The popularity of these two parks can readily be corroborated by visual observation during the warm season.

The elementary school playgrounds and the township parks of Whitewater, Milton, and Torch Lake Townships each scored between 21% and 30% overall, underscoring the importance of these playgrounds and parks to local residents with young families. The lesser known but beautiful County Day Park (Elk Rapids) was claimed as a destination by 18% of the respondents.

These were trailed by the lesser-known and used parks at the Rotary Club Park and the Palmer/Shah/Wilcox Natural Area.

4. Activities in the Parks

Question 3. What is your favorite activity when visiting area parks?

(% of respondents)

	Overall	Lakeland	Mill Creek
Swimming/water activities	91%	94%	84%
Using playground equipment	82%	81%	82%
Picnics	65%	68%	58%
Sunbathing	52%	57%	42%
Basketball	28%	33%	18%
Tennis	23%	25%	20%
Other (playing catch, biking, etc.)	38%	33%	49%

Water activities and use of playground equipment were the park activities cited by an overwhelming majority of respondents (91% and 82%, respectively). Picnicking and sunbathing were the next most popular activities. Sports activities using the facilities available at the parks (tennis, basketball, and others) comprise the bulk of the rest of the responses.

These activities emphasize the importance of the area’s lakes and water resources in the recreational activities of young families in the elementary schools.

5. Write-in Park Facility Requests

The final question requested respondents to list amenities and facilities that they would like to see at the parks they frequent. Keep in mind that these requests extend not only to parks within the Village of Elk Rapids, but also to County and Township Parks cited by respondents as frequently patronized by their families.

Question 4. What facilities, equipment, activities, or programs would you like to see more of offered at local parks?

No. of Requests	Requested Item	Frequency
45	Bathrooms	33%
24	Playground Equipment	18%
7	Bike/Walk/Jogging Trails	5%
6	More Volleyball Courts	4%
6	Swimming Lessons	4%
5	Water Fountains	4%
5	More Maintenance	4%
5	Pavilion/picnic tables	4%
5	Tennis Courts	4%
5	Organized Activities for kids	4%
4	More Basketball Hoops	3%
3	More Benches	2%
3	Skateboard Park	2%
3	Dog Runs	2%
2	Local Cleanup Campaigns	1%
1	Evening Concerts	1%
1	Fitness Park	1%
1	Security Guards	1%
1	Golf	1%
1	Archery	1%
1	More Sand Control	1%
1	Shuffleboard	1%

The largest vote getter (33%) for this write-in question was bathrooms. Indeed, the quality of bathrooms at the two most popular parks cited (Veterans Park and the Power Dam Beach) has been a subject of controversy in the past, continuing through the present.

Playground equipment for children was the next (18%), followed by a large variety of equipment and activities requested.

6. Survey Form

The survey form distributed to the two elementary schools is reproduced below.

Village of Elk Rapids Parks and Recreation Commission Youth Survey

Every five years, the Village of Elk Rapids submits an updated Community Recreation Plan to the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The purpose of this update is two-fold: first, it allows the Village Parks & Recreation Commission of to review its progress over the past five years; second, it serves as a planning tool for the future. In addition, an approved, updated, plan is required when seeking Natural Resources Trust Fund grants from the State for improvements in outdoor recreation in the Village.

A major component of the updated recreation plan comes from you - through public input. By completing this survey, your response and input will become part of our community's ongoing program that provides key resources for its youth and citizens.

Thank you for participating in this survey. It is our intent that both parents and their children work together when responding to these basic questions. If you would like more information about the survey, the recreation plan, or the Parks and Recreation Commission, please contact the village office at 264-9274. **Please return completed survey forms to your school office by Friday, April 14.**

1. As weather permits, how often would you say that your family or children use area parks?

_____ Daily	_____ Not much
_____ Weekly	_____ Never
_____ Monthly	

2. If used on a regular basis, which park(s) do you most often visit?

_____ Veterans Memorial Park (downtown)	_____ The Power Dam Beach
_____ Lakeland School (non-school hours)	_____ County Day Park
_____ Rotary Park (US-31 near Chamber)	_____ Milton Township Park
_____ Torch Lake Township Park	_____ Whitewater Township Park
_____ Mill Creek School (non-school hrs)	_____ Palmer/Shah/Wilcox Nat'l Area

3. What is your favorite activity when visiting area parks? (Please rank all that apply).

_____ Swimming or water activities	_____ Sunbathing
_____ Using playground equipment	_____ Picnics
_____ Basketball	_____ Tennis
_____ Other (playing catch, biking)	

4. What facilities, equipment, activities, or programs would you like to see more of offered at local parks? (Please use back if additional space is needed.).
