

# Quality of Life Benefits of Parks<sup>1</sup>

**Health:** According to the Trust for Public Land and Centers for Disease Control, “Studies have shown that when people have access to parks, they exercise more, and...Americans living closer to parks are more likely to exercise regularly, leading to weight loss, increased energy, and better overall health.” <sup>2</sup>

**Social:** As stated by the National Recreation and Park Association, “Parks provide a meeting place where community members can develop social ties, and where healthy behavior is modeled and admired. People gather to share experiences, socialize and to build community bonds in common green spaces. These public commons are often the glue that holds the community together and the means to maintaining and improving future positive social interactions.” <sup>3</sup>

**Economic:** According to the National Recreation Park Association, “Park and recreation areas are economic engines that improve the quality of life and make communities livable and desirable for businesses and homeowners.” <sup>3</sup> Parks improve the economic value of private property just as roads and other basic services do.

**Environmental:** “Public places such as parks are a large contributor to the urban tree canopy. One acre of trees can produce enough oxygen for 18 people and absorb enough carbon dioxide to equal emissions from driving a car 26,000 miles. One tree over a 50-year period will provide \$62,000 worth of air pollution control and generate \$31,250 worth of oxygen. Trees have been proven to absorb airborne pollutants, as an average 12.5” diameter tree stores 897 pounds of carbon per year” <sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control, 2007; 1998 Recreational Trails Census Report, Lincoln Nebraska; National Recreation and Park Association, 2007; California Recreational Trails Plan, 2002; Trust for Public Lands 2008.

<sup>2</sup> “Not Place to Play”, Trust for Public Land, 2004 and Increasing Physical Activity: A Report on Recommendations of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Richard J. Dolesh et al., “Top 10 Reasons Parks are Important”, National Recreation and Park Association 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Paul M. Sherer, “The Benefits of Parks”, Trust for Public Land, 2006 and U.S. Forest Service, 2003.