



The Outdoor Resources Review Group: *Mission, Activities, Final Reports*

Margaret Walls

Presentation to Active Living Research
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ORRG Overview

- ORRG is a bi-partisan panel of policymakers, recreation professionals, and park and conservation advocates; assembled June 2008
- 17 members + honorary co-chairs, Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) & Jeff Bingaman (D-NM)
- Leaders: Henry Diamond, Pat Noonan, Gil Grosvenor
- Funding: Laurance Rockefeller Fund, Packard Foundation, R.K. Mellon Foundation, American Conservation Association
- RFF role
 - Staffing – website, meetings, communication
 - Research study



ORRG Overview (cont.)

“[The panel] is reviewing conservation, outdoor recreation and related issues in light of changes in the needs of the American public and the resources available to meet those needs.”

Federal policy recommendations – funding, in particular

Need for Presidential/Congressional commission?



History

- 1958-1962: Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC)
 - Highly influential...
 - **Land and Water Conservation Fund Act**
 - The Wilderness Act, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, National Trails Act
- 1983: Outdoor Recreation Policy Review Group
 - Small, informal group, which led to...
- 1987: President's Commission on Americans Outdoors
 - No big federal policy changes but influence at state level (focus on greenways)



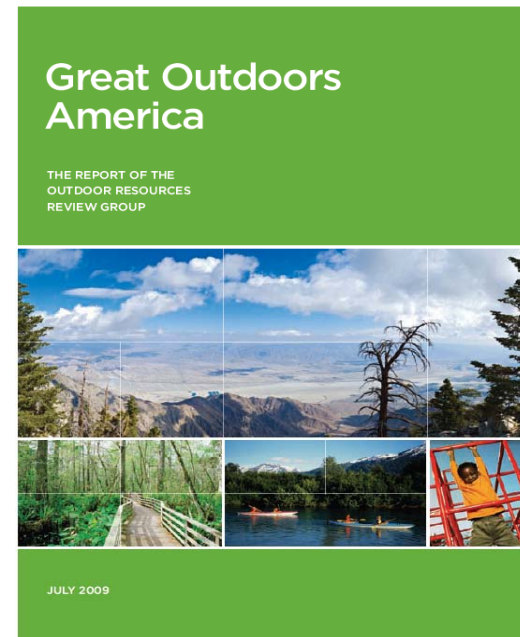
ORRG 2009 Activities

- Series of meetings held: July 2008-April 2009

- Small group meetings on
 - Health, children and nature, education
 - Wildlife habitat/conservation
 - Hunting and fishing
 - State parks; city parks
 - Funding/financing

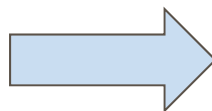
ORRG Final Products

ORRG Report
published July
2009.

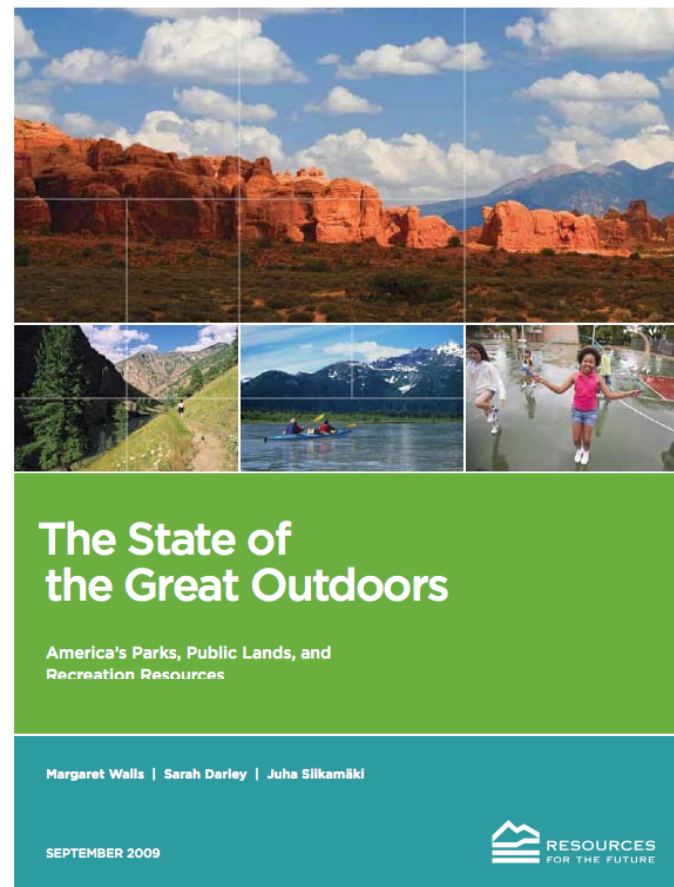


ORRG Final Products

RFF Report
published
September 2009



*Reports and series of
background studies
available at
www.rff.org/orrg*



ORRG Findings/Recommendations

- LWCF hugely successful (>7 million acres protected) but now inadequate
- Recommend \$3.2 bill/yr in short run, \$5 billion by 2015
- Recommend fixed share to states (and local communities, in turn)
 - As comparison, \$255 million in FY08, \$25 million to states



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Findings/Recommendations(cont.)

- Better recreation and conservation planning, using GIS tools
- Landscape-level conservation (through partnerships)
- Develop system of “Blueways”
- Maintain, extend support for private conservation



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Findings/Recommendations(cont.)

- Promote nature education/outdoor recreation for youth, with emphasis on
 - combating obesity
 - reconnecting children with nature
 - Focus:
 - NPS programs
 - Park & rec professionals forming alliances with health and education
 - Youth service corps



ORRG Findings/Recommendations (cont.)

- Resources needed for climate adaptation
- Improved coordination across govt agencies/programs
- Study possibility of establishing an independent trust with guaranteed funding (bring existing programs under one umbrella)

RFF Study

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*Note: study
focus was very
broad*



RFF Study

- Focused on important changes since PCAO Review in 1987
- Highlighted emerging trends/issues
- Identified data gaps and research needs



Some Key Findings

Biggest changes since mid-1980s: **funding and financing**

- More than 30 federal programs in place (\$6 billion in 2008)
- Two-thirds introduced in 1990s or 2000s
- Some states have sophisticated, well-funded programs – CO, FL, NY, CA -- but wide variation
- Growth in local voter referenda

Some Key Findings (cont.)

- Private sector more important
 - Enormous growth in land trusts – 1,667 local land trusts in 2005
 - Variety of tax and other incentives for private conservation
 - Rise in park conservancies, foundations, “friends of the park” groups
- Funding for urban parks lags



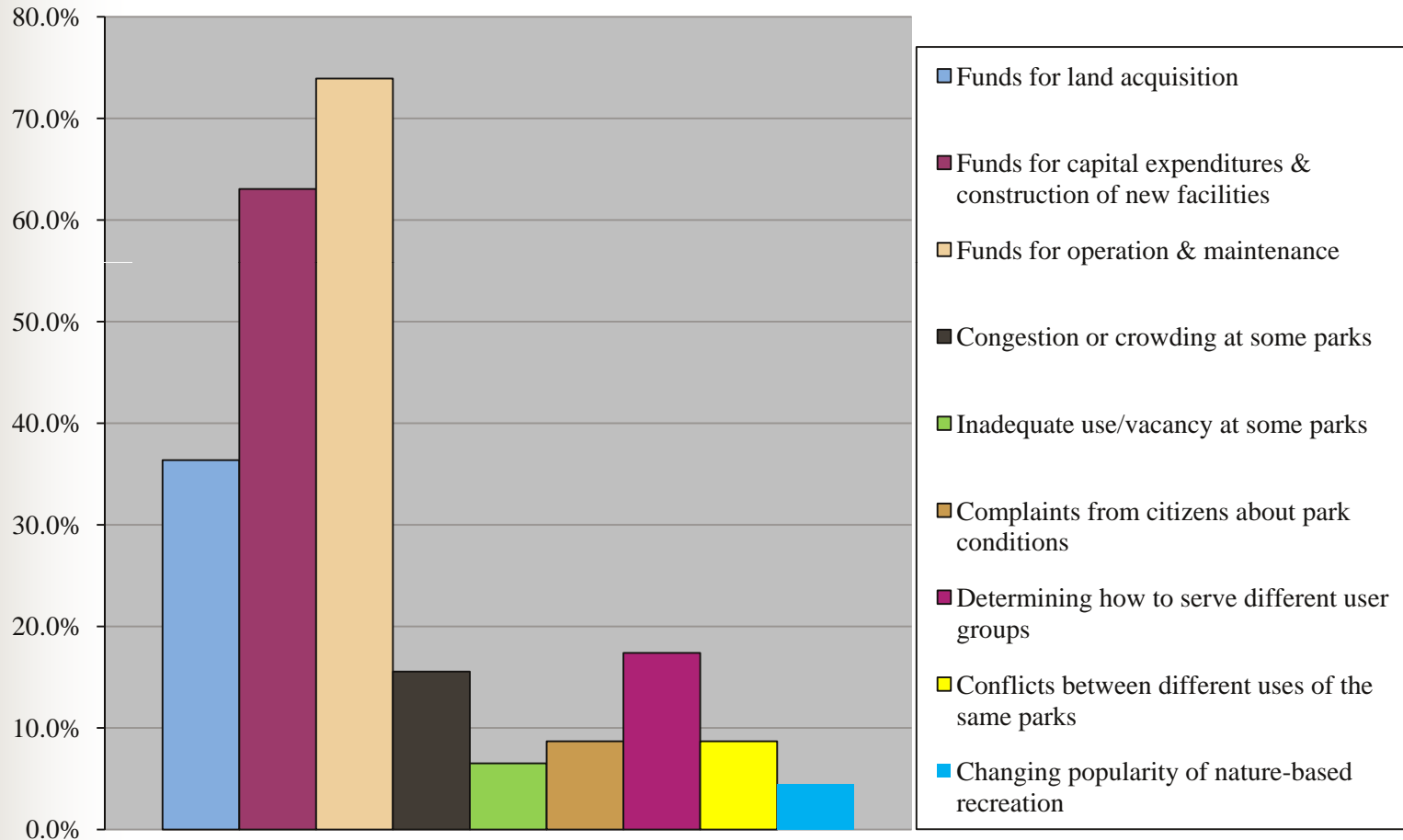
State and Local Parks

Surveys of state and local park directors

Asked about

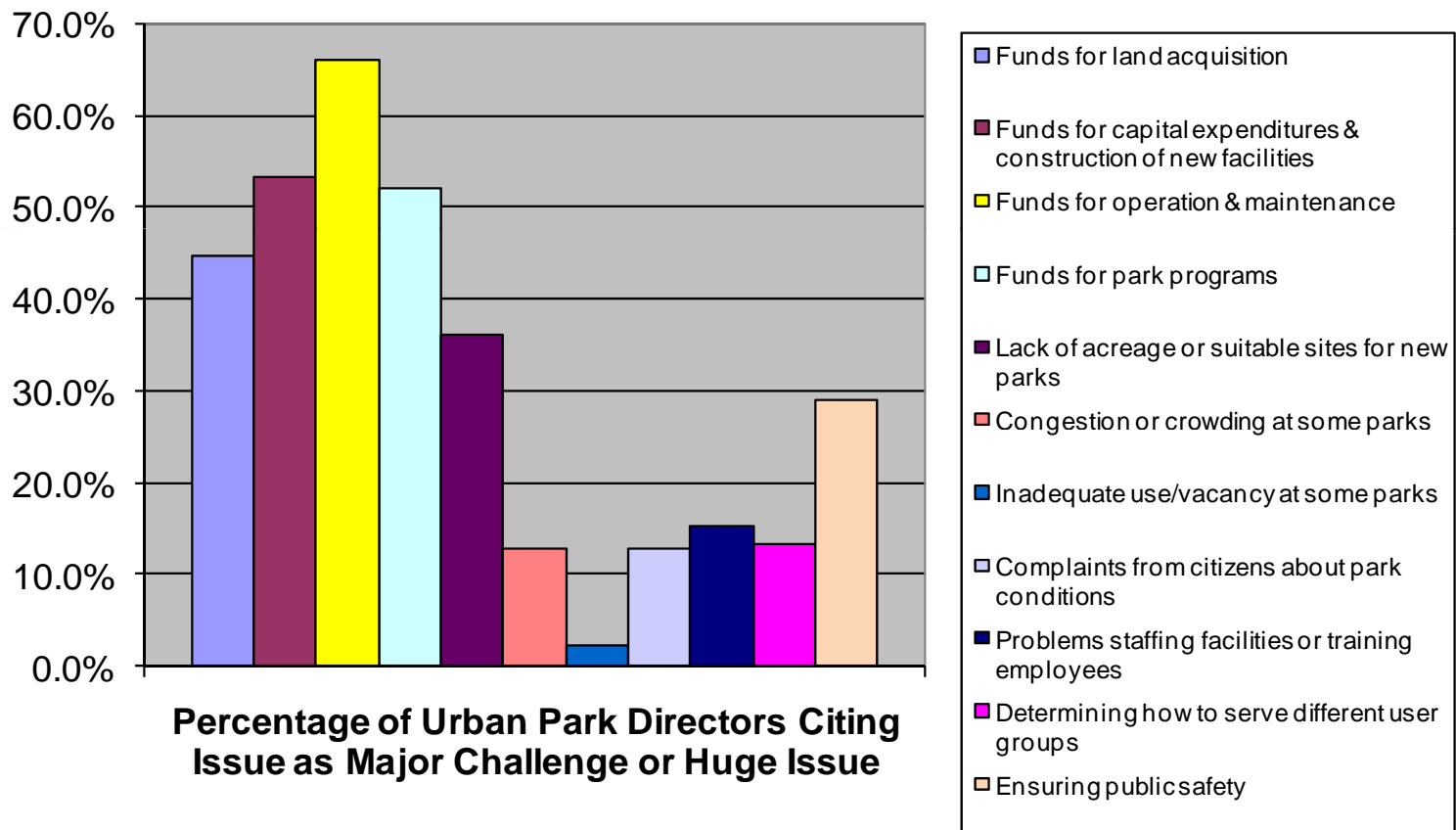
- Current challenges
- Budgets and sources of funds
- Popularity trends in their parks

Current Challenges: State Parks



Percentage of State Park Directors Who Cited Issue as Major Challenge or Huge Issue

Current Challenges: Urban Parks



5-point scale provided: from “not a challenge” to “huge issue”



Popularity Trends Question

“In your opinion, what are the overall popularity trends of the following outdoor recreation activities in your state’s [city’s] parks? (You may leave blank or answer ‘NA’ if the activity is not applicable to your parks.)”

5 choices ranging from “declining significantly” to “increasing significantly”



Popularity Trends

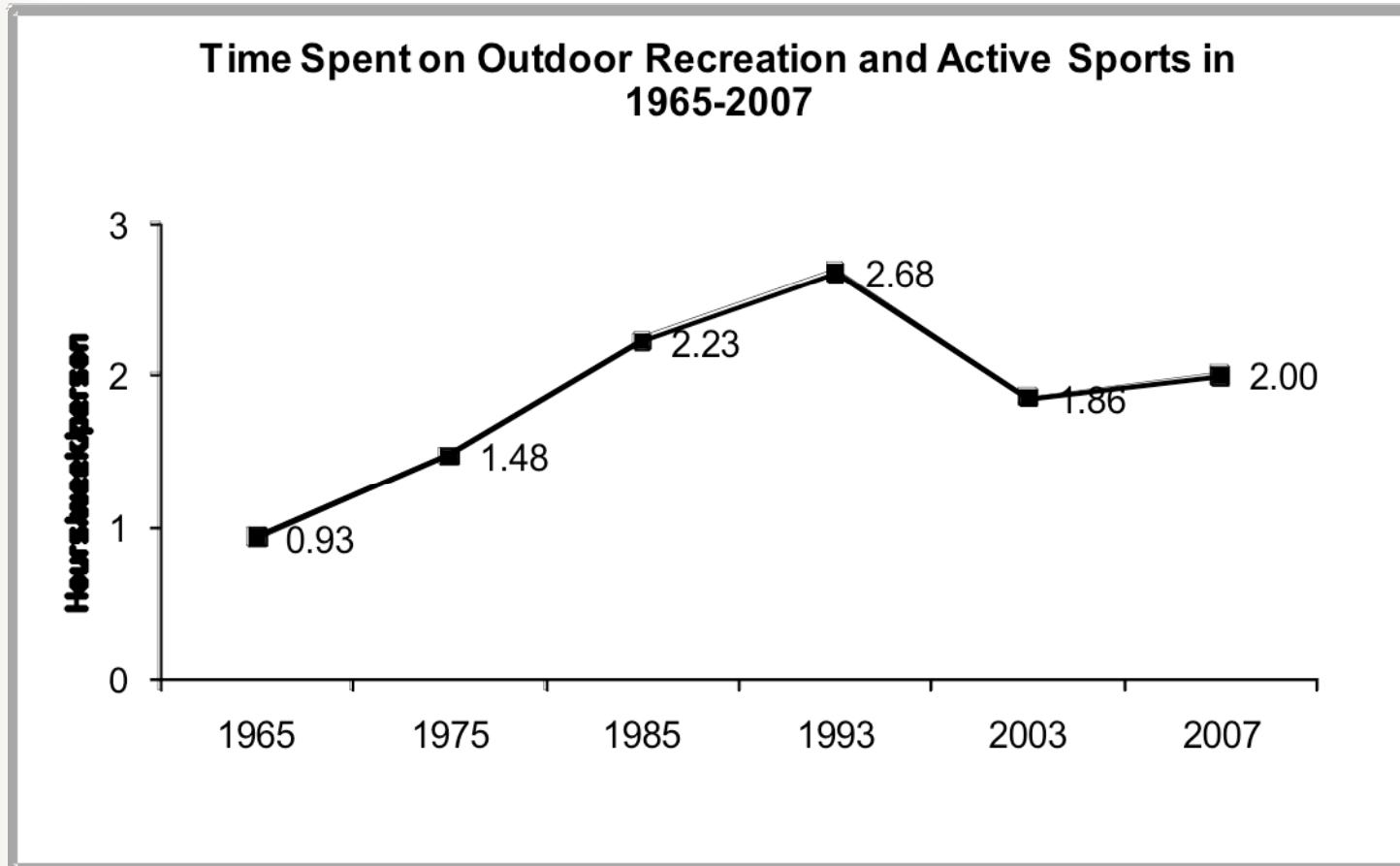
- Youth outdoor recreation:
 - 46% of state park directors reported it as declining
 - In contrast, most urban directors reported it as constant or increasing (moderately)
- Almost no “decreasing” responses from urban park directors for any of the listed activities
- State park directors: fishing and hunting declining



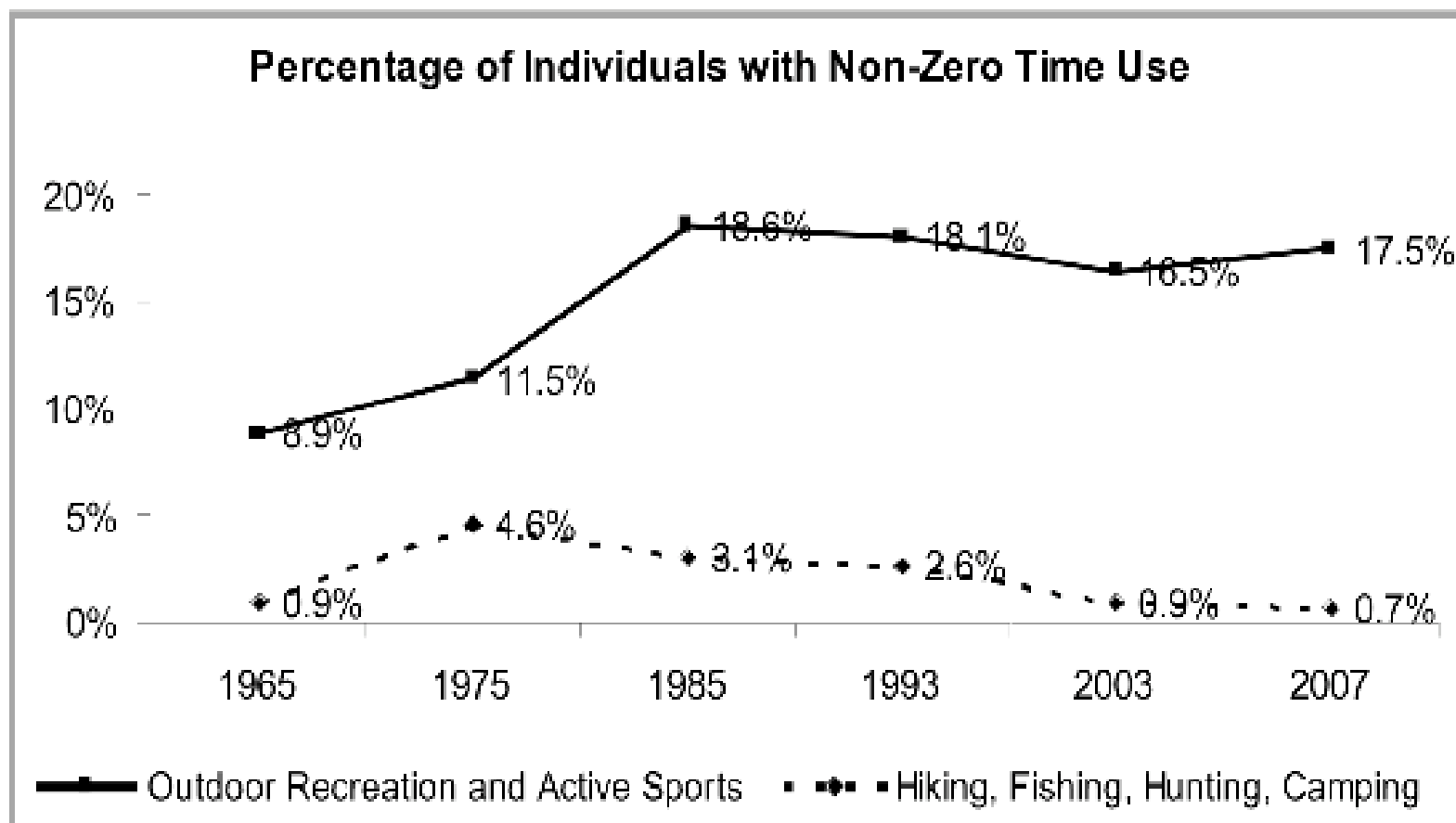
Recreation Participation Surveys

- Some inconsistencies across three major national surveys (NSRE, FHWAR Survey, and Outdoor Foundation)
- New surveys of youth: NSRE numbers high
- Underutilized survey: American Time Use Survey (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

ATUS Findings



ATUS Findings (cont.)

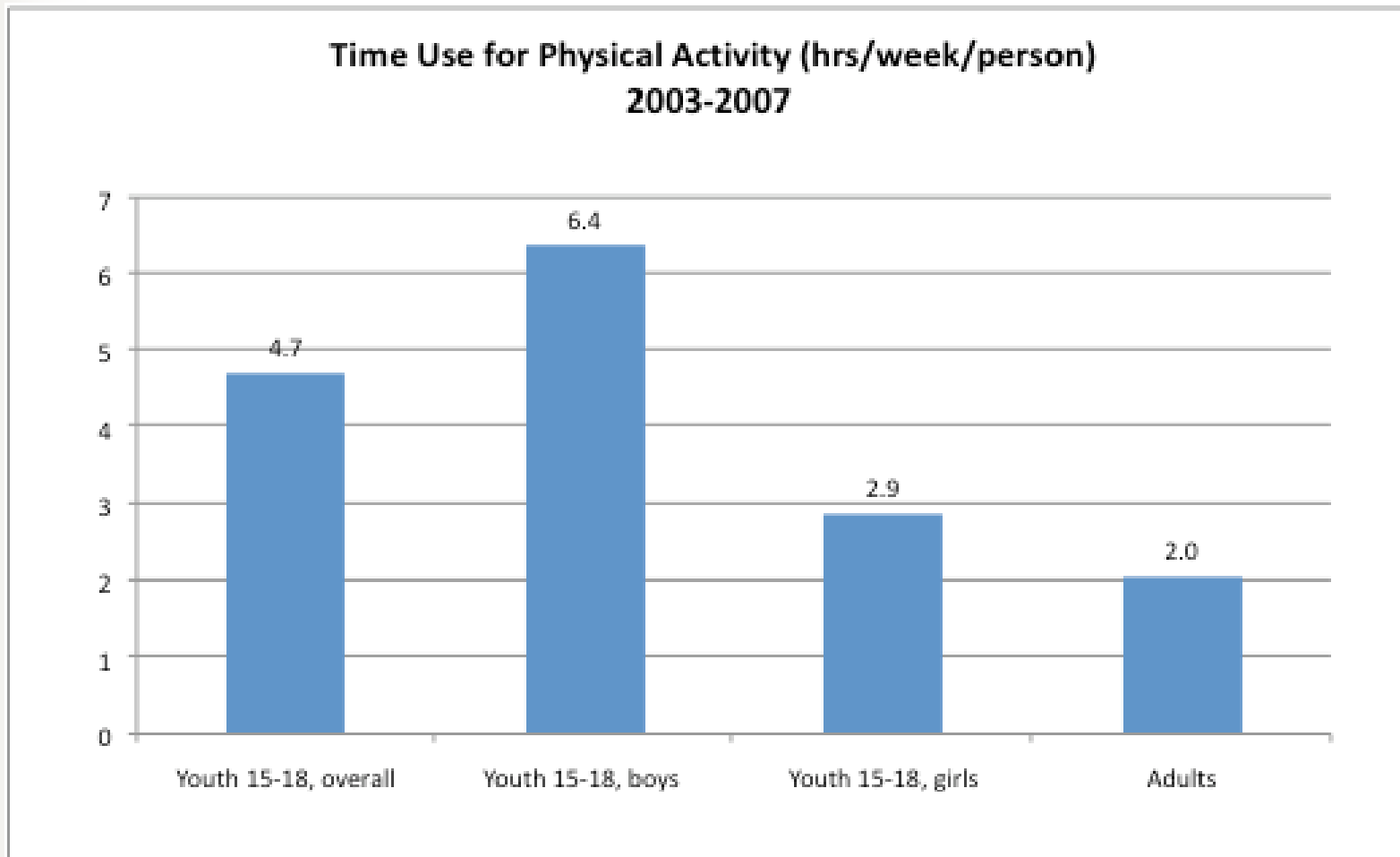


ATUS Findings (cont.)

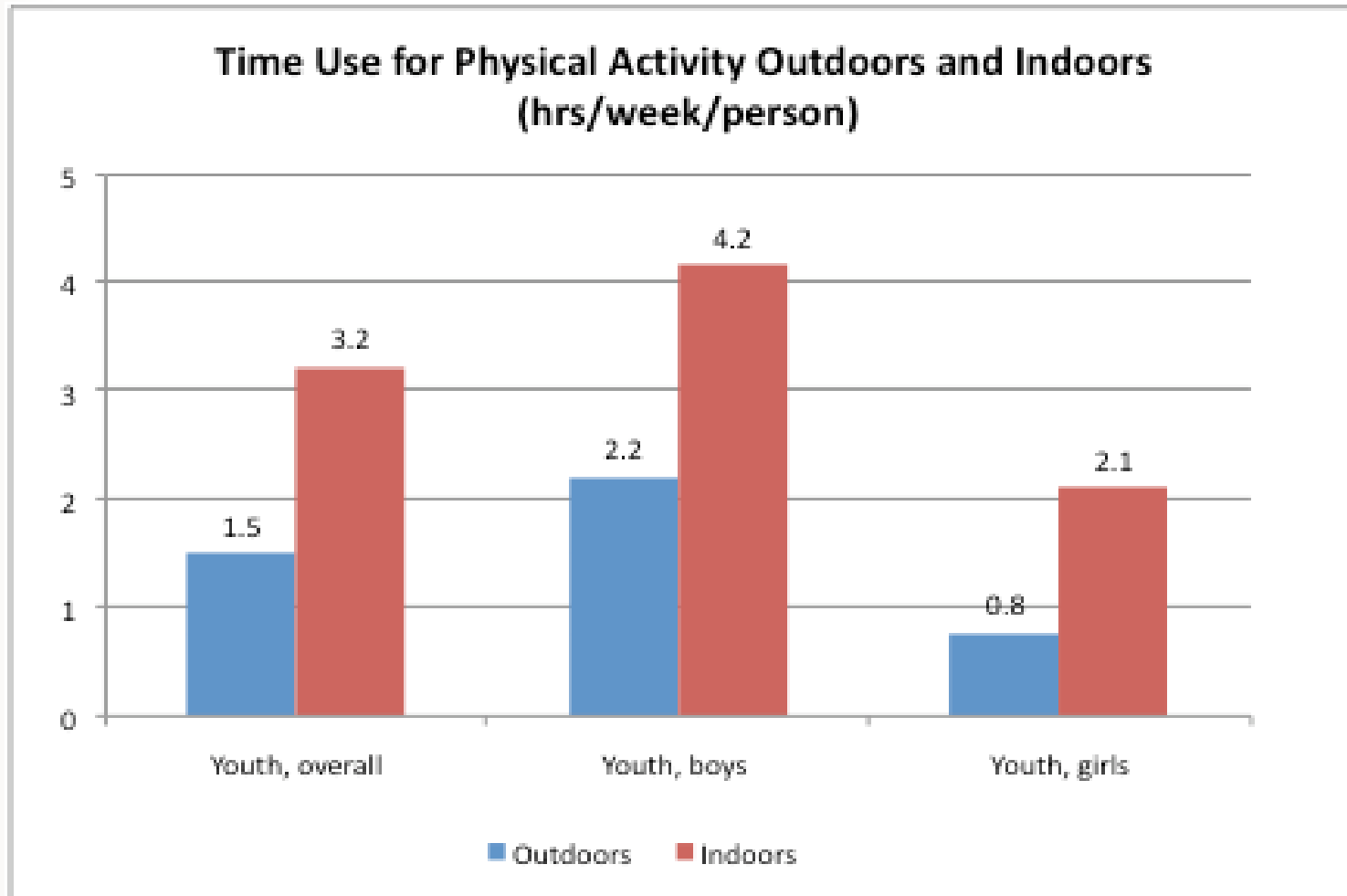
Econometric results...

- Factors driving participation
 - gender
 - children in household
 - education
 - **leisure availability**
- Elasticity of time use for outdoor recreation with respect to amount of leisure time = 0.65

ATUS Findings (cont.)



ATUS Findings (cont.)





Data/Information Gaps

- Urban parks and recreation: supply & demand
 - Stark contrast with state and federal visitation and acreage data
- GIS data on private conservation lands and urban parks/open space
- Children's participation and time spent in outdoor recreation and nature-based activities




Research Needs

- Better understanding of participation and time spent in outdoor recreation activities
 - Resolve differences in national surveys
 - Better data on kids
- Link national survey data with geographic data – location of respondents, location of parks, etc



Research Needs (cont.)

- Overall assessment of federal programs
 - What are we getting for the \$6 billion/year that we spend?
 - Are programs complementary or competing?
 - What are the best financing approaches?
- Are these programs set up to deal with problems of 21st century?
 - Climate change
 - Health, obesity



Project summary, discussion papers and
backgrounders, and more general
information available at

www.rff.org/orrg

Email walls@rff.org

Thank you!