



# Parks and Recreation Ontario BACKGROUND 2007

## OUR VISION

Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) is recognized as the expert on the values and importance of leisure to people and communities in Ontario.

## OUR MISSION

PRO is an all-inclusive, not-for-profit corporation dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for people of Ontario. PRO fulfills this mandate by collaborating with stakeholders to influence decisions and policies that support the benefits of recreation through information, advocacy, and the research and development of innovative and relevant products and services.

## OUR GOALS

- Promote the value and benefits of parks and recreation to the public.
- Positively Influence public policy and legislation affecting parks and recreation.
- Provide professional and volunteer development and information services to members.
- Provide opportunities for members to share knowledge and common interests.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

1. **Public Policy**  
Positively influence public planning and legislation.
2. **Education and Training Delivery**  
Increase the skills and knowledge of professionals and volunteers.
3. **Quality Assurance**  
Establish quality assurance and standards for parks and recreation.
4. **Member Engagement**  
Enable increased member engagement through value-added programs and services.

## WHO WE ARE

Parks and Recreation Ontario was formed in 1995 as a result of a consolidation process of former member organizations of the Parks and Recreation Federation of Ontario (PRFO). PRO now represents many disciplines within the parks and recreation sector, including:

- Accessible Recreation
- Aquatics
- Children and Youth
- Municipal Administration
- Parks, Environment and Open Space
- Volunteerism

Today, over 1,300 members including professionals, volunteers, educators, students, interested citizens, elected officials and commercial representatives — all with an interest in parks and recreation — make up the organization. Through our membership, PRO has connection with over 8,000 professionals and volunteers who provide parks and recreation services. PRO has over 200 active volunteers – making up 27 task groups, including special interest areas – supporting projects, key initiatives and governance interests of PRO.

Membership is also open to anyone working, volunteering or interested in parks and recreation from other sectors, such as fitness, sport, facilities, therapeutic recreation, camping, culture and the arts.

An elected board of directors provides direction and policy to staff, including full-time professionals, contract staff and student placements. PRO is financed through membership fees, sales of resources, educational training services, management of special projects and special revenue generation projects.

Parks and Recreation Ontario is affiliated with the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association.

## Parks and Recreation: Essential for Quality of Life



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## 2006-2007 HIGHLIGHTS

### **ADVOCACY**

PRO is an organization of people connecting with each other and working together to accomplish goals and advance the agenda for parks and recreation in Ontario. Powered by PRO members, and guided by the Public Affairs Advisory Committee, PRO is continuing to evolve as a strong voice for parks and recreation in Ontario.

PRO has achieved a reputation as a trusted advisor and a strategic partner with all orders of government and in particular with important Ministries in the Ontario Government and works closely with the Ministry of Health Promotion and other related ministries.

### **POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

On behalf of members, PRO engages in research and policy development. Our ability to positively influence legislation and increase funding for the parks and recreation sector is strengthened through partnerships and collaborations that are a crucial component of these projects. PRO is actively involved in several areas that will have a direct impact on our communities including: Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families, Supporting Volunteers, Municipal Performance Measures and Infrastructure.

### **PRO'S COMMITMENT TO QUALITY**

#### **HIGH FIVE® – Commitment to increase quality...**

135 Agencies across Ontario have adopted HIGH FIVE® : A quality standard for children's sport and recreation, founded by Parks and Recreation Ontario. The National Framework is being launched in 2007.

#### **Provincial Consortium on Youth in Recreation**

PRO works with the Provincial Consortium on Youth in Recreation, and continues to develop a process to help assess key elements of Quality Youth Recreation Services.

#### **Training, Certification and Recognition Model**

PRO, in partnership with 21 provincial organizations and two government ministries, has developed a set of industry guidelines for training standards which includes a checklist, tool kit and risk management recommendations.

#### **Municipal Performance Measurement Program**

PRO is a lead partner in developing new measures for parks and recreation and offering regional workshops to assist with the changing demands in the sector.

#### **Education and Training**

In 2006, 6,325 individuals attended training events, including 422 training sessions and workshops.

Training and education events included: Parks and Recreation Ontario Educational Forum and Trade Show; Risk and Recreation Workshops; PRO Aquatics Conference and more.

### **STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS**

PRO continues to leverage its strategic partnerships with organizations within the physical activity and recreation sector to gain support and raise public awareness for issues of importance. Increasingly, PRO engaged in cross-sectoral collaborations with organizations dedicated to health promotion, support for volunteerism and children and youth.

#### **Community Mobilization Campaigns : WinterActive, SummerActive and June is Recreation and Parks Month**

Through the support of the Ministry of Health Promotion (MHP), PRO was again the delivery agent in Ontario for the SummerActive and WinterActive campaigns, national, community-based initiatives to increase community mobilization and promote the benefits of healthy living. More than 230,000 Ontarians participated in challenges and events! And, PRO, in partnership with the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association and the Ontario Parks Association, successfully mounted June is *Recreation and Parks Month*.

#### **Play Works**

PRO is one of nine provincial organizations creating greater awareness of the importance of play for, and promoting an investment in, youth. Play Works renewed the Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program. Twenty-two communities applied and fourteen were named recipients.

#### **Cross-Sectoral Coalitions**

PRO is an active member of several health coalitions including, The Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention, Alliance, Cancer 2020, Ontario Collaborative Group on Healthy Eating and Physical Activity and the Deputy Minister of Health Promotion's Advisory Committee on Healthy Eating and Active Living.