

CITIZENS PAY \$16 EACH FOR USE OF PUBLIC PARKS

Approximately 35,000 parks serve 216.5 million U.S. citizens. They do it at a cost of \$3.5 billion per year (1975 U.S. Bureau of Census), or roughly \$16 per person per year. Parks have to be the best value in the realm of recreation at this cost.

Weeds Trees & Turf surveyed 1,000 park managers in August and received 210 responses. The names were selected at random from the approximately 3,500 park managers receiving the magazine.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) counts 291 Federal parks, 3,804 state parks, and 31,235 municipal, county, and city parks. One park director may supervise a number of parks, in fact each park may not have its own full-time maintenance person. In 1970, the

NRPA reported that less than 21,000 professionals worked full-time for the 31,235 municipal, county and city parks. Many local parks are maintained as a part of the whole county or municipal program.

Out of NRPA's 18,000 members, 5,000 are known to be managers of parks. If you assume that each state and Federal park has one manager, a figure of 4,095 managers is obtained. Making another assumption that cities with more than 10,000 residents and all counties have one person directly or indirectly in charge of parks, there are another 4,260 park managers. Consequently, a 'bottom line figure' of 8,355 park managers in the U.S. is obtained.

The 210 persons answering the survey had 78 different titles, from

park division chief to landscape foreman. It is as if governments try to defy anyone to label all or part of them with one title.

The respondents manage parks averaging 1,064 acres (median 336) with an average budget of \$268,000 (median \$260,000). Sixty-five percent of the respondents indicated their budgets are too low to do the job desired by them. An increase of 35 percent was the average needed to meet their level of satisfaction. One park manager said he needed twice as much money to do his job properly.

One way park managers combat low budgets is by doing much of the contract work themselves, such as drainage and irrigation installation, sod installation, pest control, and tree care.

Jobs performed by the greatest number of park managers and their crews are seeding, fertilization, mowing, planting and care of ornamentals, and tree trimming. The types of work hired out most are tree trimming, irrigation installation, and drainage installation, although less than half the managers contracted for these services.

Jobs not done either by outside contractors or park workers are tree feeding (20 percent), sod installation (28 percent), aquatic weed control (43 percent), sprinkler system installation (35 percent), and drainage system installation (26 percent).

Park managers fertilize roughly 40 percent of their turf area and irrigate an average of 30 percent (median 5 percent). The irrigation figures suggest that small numbers irrigate large portions of parks and large numbers irrigate small portions or none at all.

Eighty percent of the respondents said their park has baseball fields, 65 percent have soccer and football fields, and 57 percent have lakes or pools.

Managers reported an average of 12 persons on staff performing turf and tree care. This figure is high when compared to NRPA data for state and local parks which counts 133,000 personnel at 35,000 parks (about four persons per park).

The two largest expenditures for

Annual expenditures by park managers.

Type	Average	Percent Responding	Projected to 8,355
Equipment	\$15,291	92	\$117.5 million
Sod	\$ 3,830	63	\$ 20.2 million
Seed	\$ 1,150	87	\$ 8.4 million
Ornamentals	\$ 7,870	90	\$ 59.2 million
Chemicals	\$ 3,982	89	\$ 29.6 million
Total			\$234.9 million

Work performed by staff or contracted out.

Job	Done By Staff	Done By Outside Contractor	Not Done
Seeding	95%	5%	3%
Sod Installation	62%	13%	28%
Turf Fertilization	91%	4%	6%
Turf Pest Control	79%	4%	6%
Mowing of Turf	98%	2%	1%
Planting of Ornamentals	92%	16%	3%
Caring for Ornamentals	94%	3%	2%
Tree Feeding	76%	3%	20%
Tree Pest Control	79%	14%	13%
Tree Trimming	88%	21%	1%
Aquatic Weed Control	45%	6%	43%
Care of Athletic Fields	77%	14%	15%
Sprinkler System Installation	39%	37%	35%
Drainage System Installation	52%	26%	26%

*Respondents checked more than one column.

Public Parks

parks are equipment and ornamentals. Managers spend an average of \$15,000 for equipment and \$8,000 for ornamentals. They also spend an average per year of \$4,000 for chemicals, \$3,800 for sod, and \$1,150 for seed. Most purchasing is from local dealers (67-78 percent). Most purchasing for chemicals takes place in February through April, with very little chemical purchased in November or December. Equipment purchasing is done primarily in January, February, and July. Equipment purchases are not as heavily weighted to months as with chemicals. May, June

and December are the slow months for chemical purchasing.

Averages projected to 8,355 park managers give annual expenditures of \$235 million for equipment, chemicals and supplies. This is a 'bottom line' estimate of expenditures based upon a very conservative estimate of the number of park managers. It also doesn't take into consideration extremely large purchases by Federal and state parks, especially those with golf courses.

WTT

Equipment operated by park staff.

Equipment	Percentage Responding	Mean Response
Backhoes	46%	1.4
Chain Saws	91%	7.0
Flexible Line Trimmer	45%	3.3
Front End Loader	75%	1.8
Flail Mowers	55%	2.2
Rotary Mowers	89%	7.1
Reel Mower	53%	4.0
Sickle Bar	39%	1.9
Small Trim Mowers	67%	8.1
Compressed Air Sprayer	32%	2.4
Complete Sprayer with Pump and Tank	69%	2.0
Small Push-Type Spreader	67%	3.2
Large, Truck Mounted Spreader	42%	1.5
Sweepers	40%	2.0
Less than 60 H.P. Tractors	77%	4.7
More than 60 H.P. Tractors	38%	2.9
Utility Vehicles	70%	6.7

Months equipment is purchased.

	Chemicals*	Equipment*
January	5%	13%
February	12%	12%
March	16%	7%
April	16%	8%
May	9%	5%
June	8%	4%
July	6%	10%
August	8%	8%
September	9%	9%
October	6%	8%
November	3%	7%
December	2%	5%

* Percentages are percentages of all responses which occurred in the given month.

See your Ford equipment specialist



for sales, service, rental and leasing



335 TL



535 TL



531 LCG



2600 A.P.



COMPACT LOADERS



195 TRACTOR-MOWER

Put Ford power to work now!