



Kansas Recreation and Park Association

700 SW Jackson St Ste 805 - Topeka KS 66603-3737

Phone: 785-235-6533 www.krpa.org

September 28th, 2018

The Kansas Recreation and Park Association (KRPA) is asking candidates running for governor this fall to participate in a survey that examines their opinions about recreation, parks, conservation and related issues affecting the residents of Kansas. We would appreciate your participation, so voters can better understand your position on a range of recreation and park issues. Please complete the survey by October 8th, 2018 and email to erika@krpa.org.

KRPA is a non-partisan association that consists of more than 1200 members. It was established in 1948 to represent the parks, recreation, and leisure industry in Kansas. With members in nearly every county, KRPA has a vast network of support and active professionals who are dedicated to improving the quality of life in Kansas by providing high quality park and recreation services. Local parks and recreation agencies and state parks serve millions of Kansans and tourists each year at parks, open spaces and recreation facilities, and through healthy programs for children, adults, and senior citizens.

As Kansas has seen a population decline over the last several years, it is more important than ever to showcase and invest in the quality of life in Kansas. As recreation and parks contribute to several aspects of a healthy community, economic development, and conservation, it is time to devote resources to parks and recreation.

The survey you complete will be posted on the KRPA website (www.KRPA.org) and used to educate voters. Please feel free to add pages if needed.

Thank you, again, for taking the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely,

Erika Devore, MS, RD
Executive Director
Kansas Recreation and Park Association

Kansas Recreation and Park Association Questionnaire- Laura Kelly's Answers

- 1. Please describe your vision for open spaces, historic sites, and parks in Kansas. What role do these places play to our future success as a state?**

I first moved to Kansas 32 years ago with my young family because of the top-notch public schools, but also because of the strong communities and because it was a great place to raise a family. Open spaces, historic sites and parks in Kansas are critical to our communities, families and business community. These spaces add so much to the quality of life offered in Kansas and improve every community - both for families as well as businesses. If we neglect these spaces, then we lose out on important opportunities for our state.

- 2. Do you see the park and recreation industry as a viable economic driver, and if you are elected, what role will you, as a leader of the state of Kansas, play in promoting the park and recreation economy?**

Absolutely. I served as the first executive director of the Kansas Recreation and Park Association, advocating on behalf of communities to support and improve their recreation programs and parks. I will continue to be an advocate for our recreation and park programs as governor. More and more Kansas communities are embracing recreation and park programs that enhance the quality of life available to their families – and attract new business opportunities to their area. As part of my comprehensive Rural Prosperity Plan, we will partner with local communities to invest in their parks, trails and active tourism programs. As governor, I will ensure these programs have the support they need to thrive and grow our economy.

- 3. Local spending and local taxing decisions are best left to the local officials representing the citizens who elected them. Do you agree with this statement?**

Yes. I have been a vocal opponent to attempts by the Kansas Legislature to limit the authority of local governing bodies. Each city in Kansas has its own elected officials, geographic and cultural makeup, and this needs to be reflected in policy. As governor, I will continue to support local governments' ability to make choices for their community.

- 4. What do you see as the best source for stabilized funding for the operation of state parks, forests, and fish and wildlife areas given these historically underfunded areas, including interpretive services, administration, and maintenance?**

Kansas has been through a world of hurt in the last eight years. Funding cuts have reached almost all levels of state government – trickling down to the local level. That's why I led the bipartisan effort to repeal the Brownback tax experiment, putting Kansas on the road to recovery. Since then, we have seen 16 consecutive months of revenues coming in over estimates. This will allow us to rededicate funding to our local communities and stabilize funding for the operation of state parks, forests, and fish and wildlife areas.

- 5. The demand for trails development is increasing statewide as seen by the increased number of Kansas Recreational Trails Grant Applications. How would you establish a source of increased funding for trails and pathways improvements?**

Encouraging active tourism is important for the health of Kansans and of our communities as a whole. To do this, we must make sure there are safe places to ride and park bicycles in the state, and access to educational materials about bike safety. One of the first major efforts I worked on at KRPA on was the national Rails to Trails programs that expanded trails and active tourism and transportation across Kansas. This issue is very important to me, and I will continue to advocate for additional programs like this as governor.

- 6. Stewardship is activity, which is beyond routine operations and maintenance, to repair, restore, or improve lands and facilities acquired or developed for recreation and conservation purposes. To what extent would you increase the existing stewardship the existing stewardship funding to accomplish these purposes?**

If funds allow, I would support increasing the existing stewardship funding make sure that we have top-notch open spaces, historic sites, and parks, and to aid in conservation efforts so that future generations can enjoy these places.

- 7. In order to improve the quality of life for those living in distressed communities, what will your administration do to improve parks and recreational facilities in these areas for residents who want to exercise and enjoy the outdoors in a safe and clean environment?**

Every Kansan should live in a safe and clean community - regardless of zip code. That's why I put together a comprehensive [plan](#) for rural prosperity to ensure that all Kansans have the opportunity to live, work, and play in thriving communities, whether it's in Garden City or Kansas City. The plan includes prioritizing state investments in the Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism to enhance our rural communities' linkages to the state's natural assets, including lakes and trails.

- 8. We know that local participation of recreational programming is the key to a solid foundation for quality of life and health and wellness opportunities; what do you plan to do to increase these opportunities to ensure a healthy workforce, well-educated children, and increase economic prosperity using recreational programming and avoid the brain drain that Kansas is experiencing?**

I want to make Kansas a place where young people want to live, work and eventually raise a family. To do this, I will invest in education from pre-K to K-12 to college to the workforce. By investing in higher education, including technical and trade schools, and job training programs, young people in Kansas will have the skills needed to enter the workforce.

Kansas faces a problem with out-migration – especially with our young people. I want to make Kansas a safe, welcoming place to all people. It's how we attract new people and businesses to the state and keep them here. It's also how we improve the quality of life and grow our economy. We also must make sure we offer a quality of life second to none. That means good schools and jobs, but it also means quality communities, roads, healthcare and digital access. I will also restore the Kansas Arts Commission to improve our local communities.