

FORHA VESTAL PARK FOCUS GROUP

September 25th 2016

Session Objectives

- Familiarize members with the park by visiting Norman Vestal Park
- Discuss placement of play equipment
- Determine play equipment selection criteria
- Discuss play equipment priorities
- Discuss sponsorship and volunteer programs

Play Equipment Selection Criteria

Challenging (9 votes)

- Promotes creativity (not singular use)
- Age appropriate action
- Physically and mentally challenging
- Challenges children with varied age-ranges
- Offers different types of physical challenges (i.e. climbing, swinging, spinning)

Safety (6 votes)

- Is there a fall hazard?

Social (5 votes)

- Interactive with other children and parents
- Sharing space
- Encourages social skills

Fun (5 votes)

- Fast
- Fun for several ages of children

Durability (3 votes) (Last 15 – 20 years)

- Can be used in all weather (i.e. not metal)
- Can hold up over time and use

Imagination (3 votes)

- Different
- Use of imagination

Usefulness of Entire Space (2 votes)

- Multiple ways to get on and off
- Permits many children different ways in/out

Quality (1 vote)

- Well built, not flimsy

In addition the playground equipment must:

1) Be affordable 2) Have colors that blend with nature 3) Be low maintenance

6 Elements of Play

• Swinging	• Balancing
• Sliding	• Climbing
• Spinning	• Brachiating

Swinging

Expression Swings vs. Bucket Swings

- Expression swings and Bucket swings tied in votes (5 votes each)

5-12 Yr. Olds – Belt Swings & Tire Swings

- The votes were unanimous for belt swings and tire swings.
- Participants would like to have 2 sets of belt swings (4 total) and 1 tire swing.

Slides

Enclosed / Circular Slides vs. Open Slides

- All participants agreed that children would be interested in both an enclosed/circular slide and an open/straight (fast) slide.
- Participants prefer an open straight slide versus an open “bumpy” slide because the straight slides are faster.

Climbing & Balancing

The “Dark Hair” Team Recommended...

Sterling Cuevas, Laura Koerner, Cathy Ploszaj Wesevich, Stephanie Wagner, Ladelle Morse, and Jason Wilkes

Climbing nets for these reasons:

- Interactive – integrated into the play structure (not stand alone)
- Offers adult interaction with children

Balancing – Use the plastic playground curb around the playset as a balance beam. Reasons for this recommendation are:

- Can be just as entertaining as balance beam if add a few curves to curbing
- Good value

The “Other” Team Recommended...

Sarah Fulkenberry, Marlene Burns, Amy Vogel, Ana Forster, Mayor Manitzas, Charlan Beal

Climbing Nets for these reasons:

- Balance
- Strength
- Can use to get to another element
- Multiple access points

Climbing Rock for these reasons: (This is second choice if cannot afford nets)

- Strength
- Problem Solving
- Balance

Consensus:

- Both teams liked the use of nets for climbing
- Both teams liked the idea of using the landscape beam for balance
- Both teams wanted to evaluate the “supernova by Kompan” for balance as seen in Colorado Springs America’s Park

Brachiating & Spinning

Participants liked the idea of the “spinner” (Phil Hardberger Park in San Antonio).

Participants said that climbing nets would provide brachiating play.

3-D Panels & Shade

Participants liked the megaphone idea, but said that children would not have interest in 3-D panels.

Participants said that their children also liked enclosed spaces or “coves”.

Shade is important, whether artificial or natural. Natural shade is preferred.

Having a place for parents to sit was important. Participants preferred seating that overlooked the play equipment and desired benches with back support. Seating that was integrated with the play structure was not a priority.

Prioritization of 6 Elements of Play

- **Sliding** – 10 votes
- **Climbing** – 10 votes
- **Swinging** – 7 votes
- **Spinning** – 7 votes
- **Balancing** – 1 vote
- **Brachiating** – 0 votes

Other:

- **Cove** – 1 vote
- **Megaphones** – 0 votes

Top Four: Sliding, Climbing, Swinging & Spinning

Action Items

- Find a location with expression swings so that participants and their families can try out the equipment – Debra Grandjean
- Find out more about supernova by Kompan (spinning donut) in Colorado Springs – Sarah Faulkenberry
- Go visit parks with selected equipment – Steering committee
- Schedule future steering committee meetings on Sundays between 2-4 pm.

What Worked

- The focus group was widely publicized
- Good graphics
- Participants went to the park prior to discussion
- The focus group started with determining what was important in selection of playground equipment (criteria)
- Meeting was organized
- Refreshments (homemade cookies)

What would have been better if...

- Handouts were given beforehand
- Participants had seen all options

Volunteer Sign Up

1. Ladelle Morse
2. Jason Wilkes
3. Stephanie Wagner
4. Amy Vogel
5. Marlene Burns
6. Sarah Faulkenberry

Steering Committee Sign Up

1. Ladelle Morse
2. Jason Wilkes
3. Cathy Ploszaj Wesevich
4. Ana Forster
5. Stephanie Wagner
6. Laura Koerner
7. Amy Vogel
8. Sarah Faulkenberry
9. Sterling Cuevas

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Participant Introductions

Participant	Area of the Ranch	Number of Children and Ages	Vestal Park Frequency & Reasons
Charlan Beal	Double Eagle Circle	Grandchildren 12 & 7 and young twins	They use Boots as it is closer. Would like something for older children.
Marlene Burns	Riva Ridge	No young children	Retired and now visits Vestal Park every night
Sterling Cuevas	Battle Intense near Fair Oaks Pkwy	2 children – 4 & 6 yrs.	Used to go about 3 times a week, but children have outgrown and now visit Boots more often.
Sarah Faulkenberry	Dapper Dan Dr.	2 children – 3 & 5 yrs.	During the summer they would visit Vestal often, but now are outgrowing. They still visit Vestal once or twice a week.
Ana Forster	Scintilla Lane	2 children - 7 & 10 yrs.	They loved the wooden play structure. Thinks that park should have something for all age groups. Boots is too far for them.
Laura Koerner	Fairways	5 yr. old twins	Used to go more when Vestal had the wood structure, now use Boots more. Boots is also closer to home.
Garry Manitzas	Deer Meadow Estates	5 grandchildren	Has been involved in FORHA Parks & Trails since joining the FORHA Board in 2013
Ladelle Morse	Aqueduct	2 sons – 5 & 3 yrs.	Will often stop on the way home to the Vestal Park
Amy Vogel	Front Gate	4 children and one on the way – 10, 9, 5, 3 yrs.	A family like hers would greatly benefit from a park meant for all ages.
Stephanie Wagner	Windchime Way	2 sons - 5 & 7 yrs.	Used to visit Vestal more often when it was wooden. Now go to Boots. Would like to see more for older children at Vestal.
Cathy Ploszaj Wesevich	Dietz Elkhorn	4 children over 12 yrs.	Spent a lot of time at the park when kids were younger
Jason Wilkes	Pimlico	4 children and one on the way - 2, 4, 6, 8 yrs.	Used to visit Vestal more often when it was wooden. 4-year-old is bored of play structure. Now has his own playset at home.