The Recreation and Open Space element includes narratives related primarily to exterior areas used for sports activities, social gathering and recreation.

Previous goals included maintaining existing woodland character of the University, the desire to maintain recreational space, the use of native indigenous plantings, the development of Campus greens, development of a systematic trail system, creation of an arboretum and Botanical gardens, miscellaneous repairs and upgrades to existing facilities and a policy to coordinate UWF activities with the local community for achievement of these goals.

Specific outdoor areas should be supplied with utilities as needed to support specific events. For instance – areas planned for outdoor music events should include power, limited lighting and possibly seating and PA system. These special use functions should be located to prevent conflicts with adjacent uses. Complaints were received that afternoon events are at times disruptive to classes and students within the library. Current development includes an expansion of the field house. This building will provide needed indoor activity spaces for teaching, recreation and intramural sports. (Proposed areas are identified as such and further described within the landscaping section.)

Many of these goals are still appropriate. Recreation programs features can be seen as opportunity to improve and enhance life on Campus thus making the University a more inviting place for prospective students and faculty. The desire to maintain natural undisturbed areas provides for a unique Campus environment, preserves an educational asset, and provides recreation areas. The development of well defined "greens" on Campus encourages student interaction as well as structures and beautifies the Campus. The "infill" approach indicated in the Urban Design section is consistent with the goals of this section. Refer to the Urban Design (3) and Landscape Design (16) sections for additional information.

Nature trails, bike paths, running trails which have existed for some time on Campus are now officially part of the Campus Master Plan. The Oak Grove, adjacent the intramural athletic fields has also been set aside as a recreation area.

West Campus

Several additional issues have developed based on the acquisition of the Baroco property and anticipated enrollment growth. The West Campus currently hosts horse, biking, and walking trails. Development of the property should consider maintaining such recreational activities within the “landscape” borders and other natural areas.

Approximately 150 acres have been set aside on the West Campus to accommodate a future Intercollegiate Sports center.  

1. Football Stadium (30,000 people) – 9 acres 
2. Track – 7.5 acres 
3. Softball and Baseball – 14 acres (7 each) 
4. Tennis (6 courts) – 1.5 acres 
5. Natatorium – 3 acres 
6. Basketball – 3 acres 
7. Soccer – 3 acres 
8. Volleyball Courts – 2.5 acres 
10. Golf driving range & practice area – 3.5 acres

Eventually the existing field house and associated recreation and sport areas will be fully dedicated to intramural and student activities.

Waterfront

Other plans for the future include waterfront development along Thompson’s Bayou as well as recreational facilities to be developed in concert with a Marine Research Center on Santa Rosa Island. The Thompson’s Bayou development will include boat launch, mooring, and storage facilities. Recreation areas with toilet facilities are proposed. Development of this asset will allow educational opportunities and unique recreation activities as well as provide waterfront access for skiing and sailing teams.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies:

**Goal 1:** Further enhance student life and educational experiences through development of recreational and sports areas and programs within the University.

**Objective 1.1:** Provide waterfront recreation areas on Campus that enhance student life and that supports sports activities including skiing and sailing.

**Policy 1.1.1:** Set aside area for future development of a waterfront recreation area to include: boat dock, storage, launching facilities; recreation area, equipment rental facility, toilet rooms; storage facilities; access road

**Policy 1.1.2** Study proposed recreation area to determine feasibility of integrating facility with: Ski team needs, Sail team needs, Biology department research vessel mooring.

**Policy 1.1.3** Develop full program for recreation area with input from Student representatives, sports program leaders, and University marketing staff.

**Objective 1.2:** Maintain adequate areas in support of recreation and sports related activities to serve the projected student enrollment of the University.

**Policy 1.2.1:** Establish planning budget for required upgrades to existing sports fields and facilities including: addition of outdoor pool.

The Santa Rosa Island beach property will have minimal facilities consistent with the University's desire for minimal development on the beachfront property. An Education and Research facility for marine biology will allow better access to the water, additional parking, and possibly some basic infrastructure such as power, water, and toilet. Such facilities are anticipated.

A new recreation area has been created for low impact - high/low ropes course and repelling wall. It is located west of existing varsity sports complex and will remain primarily wooded. (Refer to Figure 8.2).
Policy 1.2.2: Completion of ongoing design and construction related to existing Field House.

Policy 1.2.3: Coordinate placement of recreation areas with Student housing to ensure appropriate open spaces are established adjacent areas of high student use.

Objective 1.3: Develop additional recreation and sports activities to enhance student programs

Policy 1.3.1: Include low impact programs such as high and low ropes courses.

Policy 1.3.2: Continue to investigate development of the Santa Rosa Island property for recreational use.

Objective 1.4: Establish area for future varsity sport center able to accommodate: stadium, pool, basketball and volleyball arena, softball and baseball fields, track, and soccer. Area allowed should acknowledge the needs of future Division 1 school.

Policy 1.4.1: Establish area across Thompson Bayou from the main Campus to accommodate future sports center

Objective 1.5: Study the impact and feasibility of a University golf driving range

Objective 1.6: Completion of ongoing design and construction related to existing Field House

Goal 2: Integrate recreational activities with overall campus design.

Objective 2.1: Provide areas for future development within the Mater Plan to ensure future adequate facilities

Objective 2.2: Sustain and preserve natural woodland setting areas at various conservation levels to ensure access to undisturbed natural settings

Objective 2.3: All current sports related activity use areas will be incorporated into the Master Plan such that future development can accommodate recreation and sports needs

Goal 3: Development of a Campus plan that includes areas that serve to clarify and organize the Campus as a means of improving student understanding of the Campus environment (more User friendly) and to foster interaction between students.

Objective 3.1: To develop clearly defined gathering and meeting spaces within the Campus

Objective 3.2: Creation of Campus Center

Objective 3.3: Creation of defined pathways to better organize the Campus and pedestrian circulation and interaction

Goal 4: To sustain and preserve the open space and natural woodland character of the campus.

Objective 4.1: To maintain sufficient open space woodland area, preserve the woodland character of the campus, create a balance between the developed and existing natural environment within the built areas, and establish an efficient use of open space in campus development.

Policy 4.1.1: Infrastructure and buildings shall be sited to retain as much of the existing woodlands and topography that are found on the building site before disturbance.

Goal 5: To provide recreational facilities that meet the projected demand and population increase of the University.

Objective 5.1: To coordinate with the host community to ensure adequate recreation and open space facilities to meet the needs of the campus and the local community.

Policy 5.1.1: The University shall coordinate, on an annual basis, with local Community and County Parks and Recreation Departments in order to ascertain common open space and recreation needs.

Policy 5.1.2: Establish coordination between Administration and Department faculty to ensure proper and efficient phasing of Recreational Capital Improvements to allow recreational facilities of highest priority for upgrade or replacement to be funded.

Objective 5.2: To improve recreation and open space facilities by correct existing deficiencies.

Policy 5.2.1: Arboretum and Botanic Garden: Intended to be a catalyst for a campus-wide showcase and education program for native species and plant communities.

Policy 5.2.2: Tennis courts: all 12 courts are to be resurfaced. Facilities adequate for the near future

Policy 5.2.3: Intramural fields: to improve game scheduling hours, an irrigation system and lighting shall be installed to allow play to be scheduled during evening hours. Three new fields will be needed for increased student population and community use.

Policy 5.2.4: Soccer field: to be integrated within the Sports Complex, and would serve as a practice field for the men's and women's teams.

Policy 5.2.5: Swimming Pool: an outdoor swimming pool and expanded sundeck and lawn area would be located immediately adjacent to the Natatorium and be used for student recreational and community programs.

Softball fields and Baseball field: to be renovated or replaced, but no additional fields are needed at this time. The baseball field may be supplemented with new locker rooms for home and visiting teams (no visiting team lockers presently) and improved restrooms and concession stand.