In the fifth edition of Leisure and Recreation Management, George Torkildsen illustrates just how important the business of leisure and recreation is to society. Torkildsen has vast experience in leisure management theory. Throughout his career he has taught, managed, and consulted for many organizations around the world. Torkildsen is a former chair of World Leisure, as well as an honorary life member of the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management and the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management.

The book, containing 25 chapters divided into four distinct sections, provides an in-depth look at different aspects of recreation and leisure management. Torkildsen uses his home country of the United Kingdom to provide examples of recreation and leisure currently available to the public, and he focuses on the significance of recreation and leisure, planning and trends, types of leisure, and the proper operation of a recreation program.

Among the interesting chapters to note is chapter 2, which provides the reader with a historical perspective of leisure and recreation. In chapter 8, Torkildsen introduces the term pleisure, which he describes as the combination and meeting place of play, recreation, and leisure. Chapters 9, 10, and 11 focus on government involvement in leisure and recreation, along with issues related to the voluntary and commercial sectors. The focal point of chapter 17 is the discussion of sport, physical education, and activity. This chapter is interesting because Torkildsen provides examples of the different administration organizations that oversee sport in the United Kingdom, be they national (government or nongovernment), regional, or local.

The last section of the text will prove to be very helpful to the individual studying recreation and leisure management. This portion of the book details the many areas of management involved in the leisure industry, including management principles and foundations, leadership and decision making, marketing, programming, event planning, and staffing. Chapter 22 provides an excellent look at the organization of planning a recreation and leisure event, including a detailed event-planning checklist.

The book is a very informative read and would be beneficial in teaching the subject matter. Some things that could prove helpful to students are the many side notes found throughout the book. Although not consistent from chapter to chapter, the side notes give the reader important and interesting information to supplement the material being covered, including statistics and definitions of notable terms. Another helpful feature of the book that Torkildsen includes is a section at the end of each chapter that allows readers to both analyze and learn more about the
The division of the various aspects of recreation and leisure management is beneficial. The four sections of the book each address unique areas and concerns and go to great lengths to give the reader an understanding of the material covered. The style of writing that Torkildsen uses throughout the book keeps the reader engaged and helps strike interest about the recreation and leisure industry. It is this writing style combined with the amount and depth of information covered that makes the book best suited for students in graduate-level courses.

Some facets of the text could present complications or misinterpretation. Some of the chapters do not include side notes of pertinent information for the reader. Including more side notes in the text could provide more “stand-out” information that the reader could make use of. Another potential concern is that all examples provided in the text are from the United Kingdom and may not seem relevant to other countries, although a look at an established nation on the rise in the leisure and recreation world could prove beneficial to students outside of the focal country.

The book might be more helpful if more information on the management and policies side of running a recreation and leisure organization were provided. Some of the material presented earlier in the book may not prove as relevant to those interested in management. It is important to learn about the history, recent trends, and regulations surrounding the recreation industry, but to the student learning how to run a program, perhaps it would be beneficial to focus more on the actual policies and procedures involved in recreation and leisure management. For this reason, those choosing to use this text may want to choose which chapters to cover.

Having reviewed Leisure and Recreation Management, I see that Torkildsen provides an unbiased and fair assessment of recreation and leisure and goes to great lengths to provide future managers and organizers with the necessary information to further their education. It would prove beneficial to anyone choosing to learn more about management in the recreation and leisure industry, especially at the graduate level. For that reason, Leisure and Recreation Management is a great educational supplement and is recommended for classroom use.