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1.0 Introduction

Good planning helps create communities that offer better choices for where and how people live. Planning helps community members envision the direction in which their community will grow while finding the right balance of new development and essential services, protection of the environment, and innovative change. Unlike other kinds of municipal planning, such as a transportation or housing plan, a strategy for parks and recreation facilities is focused on how people choose to spend their leisure time: it is a plan that focuses directly on the amenities that can make a city or county an outstanding place to live.

1.1 Purpose of Plan

The purpose of this 15-Year Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Plan is to ensure that the County’s recreation facilities continue to meet residents’ needs over the next 15 years. The County has several existing older parks that see very heavy use and require funding for renovations and additional maintenance. Due to the full use schedule of the existing parks and continued population growth in the County, additional parks and recreation facilities might be considered to meet the demands of the population. Decisions on how to prioritize these projects need to be made within the context of the anticipated population growth, population dispersal, uncertain fiscal conditions and changes in how residents use parks.

This plan will provide a common frame of reference as local leaders, private developers, and State and Federal agencies examine parks and recreation opportunities in Effingham County through:

- Identifying residents’ priorities for County recreation and parks programs through public meetings and feedback to County representatives
- Providing an up-to-date inventory of all County recreation facilities
- Comparing Effingham County’s recreation facilities and programs to other local communities
- Providing recommendations for existing and future recreation facilities and programs based on the data gathering and analysis listed above
- Providing a budget cost estimate for proposed facilities as well as a comprehensive list of funding options available to the County for park planning and construction

This Comprehensive Plan is a 15-year plan that addresses the active and passive recreational needs of the Effingham County community. It includes recommendations for land acquisition, improvements to existing recreation sites, development of new parks and facilities, and capital improvements. The plan reflects community input as well as feedback from Recreation and Parks Department staff, the Recreation Board, County administrators, and County Commissioners related to needs and goals that are foreseen for the next 15 years.

1.2 Planning Process

The process used to prepare this plan involved an analysis of Effingham County’s existing parks and recreation program within the context of demographic trends, other similar communities’ facilities, national park planning standards, and the County’s preferences. Data gathering activities have included evaluation of other comprehensive plans that affect Effingham County, site visits, and meetings with County representatives.

Each existing athletic and recreational facility within the County’s park system was evaluated by Effingham County Recreation and Parks (ECRP) staff using a standard evaluation procedure provided by CHA. Each site was evaluated through a review of the presence/quality of the following amenities as well as code compliance:
effingham county
15-year comprehensive recreation and parks plan

- Entry drives and parking areas
- Trails
- Playgrounds
- Picnic areas
- Sports and recreation fields
- Buildings

The County’s preferences were evaluated using a written Recreation Facility User Questionnaire and a workshop with County staff, the Recreation Board and the Board of Commissioners. These site and preference evaluations were then combined with demographic and trending research to develop this Recreation Master Plan.

1.3 Description of the County

Effingham County is located in southeastern Georgia along the Georgia/South Carolina border. With a 2013 population estimated at 54,456 (U.S. Census Bureau), Effingham County is bordered by Screven County to the north, Bulloch County to the west, Bryan and Chatham Counties to the south, and Jasper County, South Carolina, to the east.

The major highways and transportation routes within the County consist of GA Hwy 21, which runs northwest to southeast along the spine of the County through the cities of Springfield and Rincon. GA Hwy 17 also runs northwest to southeast (i.e., parallel to GA Hwy 21) through the City of Guyton in the western side of the County. The major east-west corridor is GA Hwy 119, which runs through Clyo, Springfield and Guyton. The County also has access to a major interstate (I-16) and federal highway (US Hwy 80), which both run northwest to southeast through the southernmost tip of the County.

Prominent natural features of the county include the Ogeechee River, which forms the western border, and the Savannah River, which forms the eastern border with South Carolina. The Savannah National Wildlife Refuge includes parts of eastern Effingham and Chatham Counties and consists of over 29,000 acres of freshwater marshes, tidal rivers and creeks, and bottomland hardwoods.

The City of Rincon, located in the southeastern portion of the county, is Effingham County’s largest community, with approximately 9,200 residents. Rincon is located just eight miles north of the City of Savannah. Other communities within Effingham County include the county seat Springfield, population 2,800; Guyton, population 1,700; and the unincorporated village of Clyo. The vast majority of County residents, approximately 80%, reside in the southern half of the County, while the remaining 20% reside in the northern half of the County.

Population data from the U.S. Census Bureau show 39 percent growth from 2000 to 2010, mostly due to the growing number of residents that commute to Savannah and Chatham County for work. Projections from the Georgia Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget point to ongoing growth, on the order of an additional 24,000 residents by the year 2030, or slightly more than 2% growth annually. Table 1 summarizes population estimates for Effingham County and the State of Georgia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 - Population Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effingham County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: U.S. Census Bureau &amp; Georgia Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4 Planning Background

The planning process included a review of existing planning documents as they pertain to parks and recreation. In order to place Effingham County's parks and recreation system in a larger context, preparation of this plan included a comparison with other nearby counties (see the chapter titled Current Trends and Similar Communities) and a review of the following documents.

Georgia Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2014-2016

The Georgia Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2014-2016 (SCORP) provided several updates to the SCORP 2008-2013, taking into account the impacts of the Great Recession, continued health declines of both adults and children, and the continually shifting recreational preferences of a more diverse population. The SCORP 2008-2013 was developed using an in-depth collection of data consisting of:

- A comprehensive resource inventory of all federal, state, county, and city outdoor recreation areas and facilities;
- Trends and benchmarks analysis of the emerging trends impacting the state;
- Telephone surveys to quantify opinions on outdoor recreation resources; and
- Public meetings, stakeholder groups, online comments and various other public involvement avenues for people to express their opinions.

The SCORP laid out increased threats to parks and open space planning including increased urbanization, funding inconsistencies, limited access to parks via public transportation, and fluctuating interests amongst various populations. Recommendations to counter these threats involved:

- Encouraging natural and open space preservation via tax incentives, greenspace requirements for new developments, and municipalities acquiring land for parks before property values make this option too expensive;
- Providing dedicated funding for parks via SPLOST and other taxes;
- Increasing public transportation service to existing parks and taking mass transit routes into account when planning new open spaces; and
- Increasing flexibility of open spaces and recreational facilities to accommodate a wide variety of activities.

Effingham County Comprehensive Plan

The Effingham County Comprehensive Plan was developed as a road map for the community’s future, developed through a public process involving community leaders, stakeholders and the public. It lays out a Vision Statement for the County that begins

*Effingham County will be a cohesive community in which people are excited to live, work, invest, visit, and raise a family. We will embrace an environment supportive of housing options, spiritual and cultural diversity, varied employment possibilities, high quality commercial and entertainment venues, excellent education institutions, managed wildlife and natural resources, and a multitude of outdoor recreational amenities, while appreciating our cultural and agricultural heritage.*

This effort to make Effingham County a quality place to live can be achieved through various measures set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, including guiding future development, providing a welcoming environment for business and employment opportunities, and preserving the historic character of the community. In relation to parks and open space planning, specific goals include tree preservation, protecting river resources, and enhancing green spaces and recreational areas.
Multi-Modal Transportation Study of Effingham County

In July 2008 the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), in cooperation with Effingham County, completed a Multi-Modal Transportation Study (MMTS) for the county and the cities of Guyton, Rincon, and Springfield. The MMTS was created to help select and prioritize future transportation programs and projects through the year 2030. It included a detailed inventory and analysis of multiple aspects of the transportation network, including roads and bridges, freight, public transportation, and bicycles and pedestrian facilities.

For this Recreation Master Plan, special note should be taken of the bicycle and pedestrian recommendations in Chapter 6 of the MMTS. In identifying potential bicycle and pedestrian improvements, emphasis was placed on creating a continuous countywide network that served users wishing to access specific destinations in a safe and timely manner. Recommendations included adding sidewalks where appropriate, upgrading existing roadways to include bicycle lanes, and providing dedicated multi-modal paths for riders and walkers where vehicular traffic was heavy. Appendix A includes the proposed bicycle and pedestrian improvements plans from the MMTS.
2.0 Needs Assessment

2.1 National Trends

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) was formed in 1965 and now serves as the leading advocacy organization dedicated to the advancement of public parks, recreation, and conservation. In 1983 the NRPA and its Director of Research, Roger A. Lancaster, published *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*. This publication quickly became the gold standard of park and recreation planning throughout the country. While it still continues to hold great sway in statewide and local government planning (as discussed in the next section), the publication was last updated in 1997. Since that time, recreation needs have changed and diversified among various populations.

In order to better understand and track these changes, the NRPA began collecting data from individual municipalities concerning their staffing, facilities, programs, and budgets. This information was collected via voluntary surveys filled out online and that data entered into the NRPA’s Park and Recreation Operating Ratio & Geographic Information System (PRORAGIS). Now the NRPA allows municipalities to search the PROGRAGIS database and benchmark with others of their size/population distribution/etc. This database permits counties, such as Effingham County, to compare itself to other counties, rather than to national averages that can be skewed greatly by large urban cities with large operating budgets.

For this report, the *PRORAGIS Database Report: Counties* was used to benchmark Effingham County’s programs and trends. Due to the County’s budget, ECRP’s total operating expenditures, and median household income, the Median Value numbers were used from the report. Based on current data from the U.S. Census Bureau and estimates provided by the Georgia Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget, Effingham County has a 2013 population of 54,456 and a projected 2025 population of 71,331.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amenity</th>
<th>Population Per 1 Amenity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Center</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Court (Outdoor)</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball Court</td>
<td>29,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pool (Outdoor)</td>
<td>209,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Center</td>
<td>227,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular Fields: Football</td>
<td>27,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular Fields: Soccer, etc. (regulation sized)</td>
<td>21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular Fields: Soccer, etc. (small-sized)</td>
<td>42,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Fields: Baseball w/ 90’ paths</td>
<td>52,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Fields: Baseball w/ 50-65’ paths</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Fields: Softball</td>
<td>19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Park</td>
<td>262,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature/Interpretive Center</td>
<td>311,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboard Park</td>
<td>Not Included</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 provides a summary of amenities and their suggested population served based on the previously discussed PRORAGIS standards. For comparison purposes later in this chapter the categories of
Recreation/Community Centers, Fitness Centers and/or Gyms, and Performing/Visual Arts Community Centers in the PRORAGIS report were combined into one category of Community Center. For the same comparison purposes, Playgrounds and Tot Lots were combined into one category of Playground.

These amenity suggestions are based on current nationwide inventories. As the PRORAGIS database is updated and expanded throughout the projected 15-year lifespan of this Effingham County report, these amenity trends should be considered fluid. For example, in some parts of the country soccer has grown more popular in the last decade, so ten years ago soccer fields might not have been as prevalent as they are now.

2.2 Open Space Standards and Guidelines

As discussed in the previous section, the NRPA Standards and Guidelines, which were originally released in 1983 and most recently updated in 1997, were widely used as a basis for local open space planning. In contrast, the Georgia Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2014-2016 (SCORP) was created as more of a broad-stroke guideline document for setting recreation policy and disbursing funds throughout the State. Fortunately, the Commonwealth of Virginia created a comprehensive planning document that updated the NRPA guidelines through surveys of users and parks programs around the Commonwealth. While not specifically created for Georgia, Virginia and Georgia have similar populations, and this similarity allows the 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) to provide a valuable set of updated standards and guidelines that can also be used for planning purposes in Effingham County.

Park Area Standards

Area guidelines are used to determine the number of acres of park lands needed by a locality. These guidelines are usually expressed as a minimum number of acres per 1,000 people in the population. Different recreation needs can be addressed by different park classifications, each with its own unique function and service radius within the County. Appendix B includes the VOP’s “Appendix C”, which explains the park classifications and their intended functions. Table 3 summarizes the area guidelines for each park type based on the VOP park classifications and local population needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Acres/1,000</th>
<th>Service Radius</th>
<th>Minimum Size (Acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playground</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 Miles</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 Miles</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 Miles</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Park</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5-7 Miles</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Park</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25 Miles</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Park</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 Hour</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 1 through 3 show the existing Neighborhood, Community, and District Parks in Effingham County and their service radii. Some of the parks listed in each category might not strictly meet the size acreages as described in the VOP, but based on the recreational amenities and functions of each park, they have been placed in the most appropriate categories.
As shown above and in Figure 4 on the following page, the majority of Parks are clustered in the Rincon and Springfield areas. The larger District Parks tend to be in the more suburban and rural areas because there is more space for them; therefore, these parks require travel for most residents. As discussed extensively in the SCORP, a dearth of recreational opportunities for residents, especially young people, of the more rural areas can lead to a diminished conservation ethic and declining health. Effingham County does not maintain any Regional-level parks.
While individual park classes have their individual acreage requirements, the cumulative amount of acres of recreational lands is also important. The recommended area guidelines for local recreation and park sites are a minimum of 10 acres per 1,000 people. “Local” park sites include three acres for Neighborhood Parks, three acres for Community Parks, and four acres for District Parks to achieve the 10 acres threshold. For a projected 2025 population of 71,331 residents, a minimum of 713 acres of local parks should be strived for. Currently, the total acreage of “local” parks in the County is 191, which leaves a deficit of 522 acres of local parks.

Overall recommended area guidelines for all parks, including the Regional and State Parks (ten acres per each category) plus the “local” parks discussed in the previous paragraph, is a minimum of 20 acres per 1,000 people. For a projected 2025 population of 71,331 residents, a total of 1,426 acres of parkland would be considered adequate. The Savannah National Wildlife Refuge would qualify as a State Park and the portions of the Refuge within the County amount to a total of 7,137 acres. When combined with the “local” parks, a total of 7,328 acres of existing parklands currently exist in the County. This total acreage of parklands well exceeds the recommended overall totals; however, consideration should be given to the fact that the Refuge is limited to mostly passive recreation and does not allow for more structured recreational activities. As the population in Effingham County continues to grow, land available for open space will continue to shrink. The County will need to begin planning now to meet the current and future recreational needs of its residents.

Amenity Recommendations

In addition to park classification and service radii, the 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan also recommends capacity and space guidelines for specific amenities. These guidelines include recommendations for amenity units per population (e.g., one baseball diamond per 6,000 residents) based on the previously discussed 1983 NRPA standards, and updated via the user and municipality surveys. These standards can be considered a good starting point for parks and recreation planning; however, like the NRPA guidelines on which they were based, they are derived from data taken from localities of all sizes and budgets. When considering the recreational needs for Effingham County, these standards should be taken as absolute minimum standards but rather should be considered together with the PRORAGIS recommendations of the previous section as well as user and resident input to be discussed in later sections. Table 4 summarizes the recommendations of the same amenities considered in the previous section for ease of comparison. The full list of recommendations can also be found in Appendix B.
### Table 4 - Amenity Recommendations – Virginia Outdoors Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amenity</th>
<th>Population Per 1 Amenity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Center</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground</td>
<td>Not Included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Court (Outdoor)</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball Court</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pool (Outdoor)</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Center</td>
<td>Not Included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular Fields: Football</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular Fields: Soccer, etc. (regulation sized)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular Fields: Soccer, etc. (small-sized)</td>
<td>Not Included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Fields: Baseball w/ 90’ paths</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Fields: Baseball w/ 50-65’ paths</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Fields: Softball</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboard Park</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.3 Existing Recreation Facilities Inventory

Between July 30 and August 1, 2014, ECRP staff visited County parks to assess the number and condition of existing facilities. Staff reviewed the state of playing fields, courts, and existing structures at each of the following facilities:

- Annex Ball Park
- Clyo Community Center
- McCall Park
- Pineora Ball Park
- R.B. Baker Lake and Walking Trail
- Sand Hill Complex
- SR119 Recreation Complex, and
- Ulmer Park.

Table 5 provides a summary of the inventory results. In addition to the parks that were inventoried, a total count of facilities not maintained by the county but available to residents for their use is also shown to account for all public facilities within the county. These “Other County Parks” primarily consist of park facilities located with the City of Rincon and gymnasium facilities within the Effingham County School system that are used as practice facilities.
Table 5 - Summary of ECRP Recreation Facilities Inventory Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITION ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>SUBTOTAL</th>
<th>Other County Parks</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Recreation/Community Center/Gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing/Visual Arts Community Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Court (Outdoor)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball Court (Outdoor)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pool (Outdoor)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Center</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular Fields: Football/Soccer*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Fields: Baseball w/ 90' paths</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Fields: Baseball w/50-65' paths</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Fields: Softball</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature/Interpretive Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboard Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Effingham County utilizes multi-purpose rectangular fields that can be used for either football or soccer. Additionally, many baseball outfields are used for fall football/soccer; therefore this tally includes fields designed exclusively as rectangular fields.

Table 5 shows that with the exception of a few playgrounds and athletic fields, the existing parks and recreation facilities in Effingham County are rated to be in fair to poor condition. Generally, many of the County’s recreational facilities are older and have been poorly maintained. Renovating and upgrading existing facilities should be a first step to meeting existing resident needs.

2.4 Public Input

On September 9, 2014 a public meeting was held involving CHA, the Effingham County Board of Commissioners, the Effingham County Recreation Board, and local citizens. CHA presented its initial findings on existing park conditions and results of the needs assessment, as well as provided a few preliminary suggestions for recreation improvements. Feedback from attendees was solicited from the two Boards as well as the citizen attendees concerning needs they felt were not met in the current facilities. The first part of the discussion centered on existing parks use and deficiencies. The concerns included heavy use of the fields year-round not allowing for proper rest and rejuvenation of the grass, inadequate parking at all facilities, and inadequate funding for maintenance. The next part of the discussion focused on future park expansion. Several options were voiced including expanding existing parks and additional properties available for a new large tournament-ready park.

One additional workshop between CHA and the Effingham County Recreation Board was conducted on September 29, 2014, to develop two prioritized lists of projects. The first project list was of critical needs at the existing recreation facilities to provide direction for use of the funding that is currently available to the ECRP through the existing SPLOST program. The second project list consisted of a wish list for a new centralized park that would greatly expand the County’s recreation program and allow for more tournaments and, in turn, tourist dollars to the County. Appendix C provides meeting notes and the wish lists from both meetings.
A second and final public meeting was held on November 4, 2014 involving CHA, the Effingham County Board of Commissioners, the Effingham County Recreation Board, and local citizens. CHA presented its findings and recommendations for the Phasing and Implementation Plan. Feedback from attendees was solicited from the two Boards as well as the citizen attendees concerning our recommendations.

### 2.5 Approved SPLOST Projects

In November 2011, the voters of Effingham County approved a one-percent Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) to fund many much-needed projects. Along with funding for public safety, infrastructure, and technology, over $2.7 Million was allocated for parks and recreation improvements. Much of this funding has been identified for projects at existing parks, with some funds set aside for land acquisition to expand the SR119 Recreation Complex. Table 6 summarizes the current program of SPLOST-funded projects for parks and recreation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SR119 Recreation Complex</td>
<td>Renovate ballfields and gym</td>
<td>$1,755,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR119 Recreation Complex</td>
<td>Additional land purchase</td>
<td>$477,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulmer Park</td>
<td>General improvements</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Learning Center</td>
<td>Improvements to the gym</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlas Sand &amp; Gravel Property</td>
<td></td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.6 Needs Assessment Conclusions

Effingham County is similar in land area but has a fifth of the population of its more urban neighbor Chatham County, and as such is more rural in character with a lower population density. The population centers of Rincon and Springfield include several recreational opportunities close at hand for residents. Guyton and Clyo also include parks, but these parks are more specialized. The rural communities outside of these areas have few recreational opportunities within walking distance of their homes. To promote good health and an ethic of environmental conservation, populations should have ready access to parks and open spaces. Ideally, a small neighborhood or community park should be within walking distance of someone’s home, but realistically the spread-out nature of more rural areas means these parks aren’t always feasible, especially when maintenance costs are considered. A more sensible goal should be a park or natural area within five to seven miles of a resident’s home in the areas highlighted in Figure 4.

Table 7 summarizes the PRORAGIS and VOP standards for individual recreation amenities and compares them to the County’s current inventory of recreation facilities. This table can be useful as a guide to future facility development. In addition to the more formal active recreation facilities discussed in Table 7, passive recreation opportunities have grown in popularity nationwide. These can include walking trails and picnic areas, which are relatively inexpensive to build and maintain. Most importantly, this Needs Assessment should be considered a dynamic document and open to periodic updates. As populations grow and desires change, recreational needs can shift. As such, Effingham County will need to stay cognizant of the wishes of its population and the current recreation trends throughout Georgia and the nation as it continues to grow and prosper.
# Effingham County
## 15-Year Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Plan

### Table 7 - Comparison of Effingham County Recreation Amenities to PRORAGIS and VOP Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMENITY</th>
<th>POP PER 1 AMENITY PRORAGIS</th>
<th>2015/2014 EFFINGHAM CO AMENITIES NEEDED (PER 5,000/POP)</th>
<th>2025 EFFINGHAM CO AMENITIES NEEDED (PER 7,000/POP)</th>
<th>POP PER 1 AMENITY V.O.P</th>
<th>2015/2014 EFFINGHAM CO AMENITIES NEEDED (PER 5,000/POP)</th>
<th>2025 EFFINGHAM CO AMENITIES NEEDED (PER 7,000/POP)</th>
<th>EFFINGHAM CO CURRENT AMENITIES / ADOY AMENITIES NEEDED (PER PRORAGIS)</th>
<th>EFFINGHAM CO ADOY AMENITIES NEEDED (PER V.O.P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Center*</td>
<td>70000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground**</td>
<td>15000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Court (Outdoor)</td>
<td>13000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball Court (Outdoor)</td>
<td>29000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pool (Outdoor)</td>
<td>209000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Center</td>
<td>227000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular Fields: Football/Soccer***</td>
<td>21000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Fields: Baseball w/ 90’ paths</td>
<td>52000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Fields: Baseball w/50-65’ paths</td>
<td>16000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Fields: Softball</td>
<td>19000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Park</td>
<td>262500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature/Interpretive Center</td>
<td>311000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboard Park</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* PRORAGIS provides separate categories for Recreation/Community Centers, Fitness Centers and/or Gyms, and Performing/Visual Arts Community Centers. The V.O.P. considers these all of these amenities within a single Community Center for planning purposes. For comparison purposes, the Effingham County inventory also considered all of these amenities as components of a Community Center.

** For comparison purposes, the Effingham County inventory considers Playgrounds and Tot Lots to be similar and has counted them both in the same category.

*** Effingham County utilizes multi-purpose rectangular fields that can be used for either football or soccer. Additionally, many baseball outfields are used for fall football/soccer; therefore this tally includes fields designed exclusively as rectangular fields.
3.0 Existing Athletic & Recreation Facilities

Effingham County’s existing inventory of recreation facilities includes seven (7) parks, two (2) ball fields incorporated into other facilities’ properties, and five (5) boat landings. In addition to these recreation facilities maintained by the Recreation & Parks Department, there are six (6) indoor gyms that are used in an agreement with the Effingham County Board of Education.

Most of the County’s facilities have suffered in the last decade from poor maintenance and overuse. There is no standardized entry or wayfinding signage, and most parks have no signs at all. The majority of the fields are designed as baseball fields with the outfields used for football and soccer in the fall and winter. While this represents an efficient use of available space, it also results in year-round wear and tear on the turf. In addition, the playground surfaces are almost all dirt or sand. These materials have very little cushion for falls and are not recommended per modern playground guidelines.

A brief summary of the results of the inventory of ECRP facilities is provided below and on the following pages.

SR119 Recreation Complex

The SR119 Recreation Complex is the largest park in the Springfield area. Its three (3) baseball/softball and full-sized football fields are used heavily for team play. Indoor facilities at this complex include a full-sized gym and meeting rooms.

Pros

- Centrally-located
- Fields are fenced and lit
- Playground in good shape
- Gym floor is in good shape
- Paved walking track around the complex

Cons

- Turf fields need renovation
- Spectator bleachers/stands are old/worn
- Park buildings need renovation (restrooms/concessions/shelter)
- Gym building needs interior and exterior maintenance
- Not enough fields to meet demand
- No delineated parking
Sand Hill Complex

The Sand Hill Complex is the jewel of the Effingham County parks system. It is the newest park and has the facilities in the best shape. It and the SR119 Recreation Complex are the only parks that are used for competitive games, all other parks and fields are used for practice only. Along with five (5) baseball/softball fields and two (2) football/soccer fields, the complex also includes a playground, pond, and ample space for kite and remote control airplane flying.

Pros

- Lots of space for many activities
- Fields are fenced and lit
- Playground in good shape
- Playing fields are irrigated and show less wear
- Buildings are in good shape

Cons

- Not centrally located to majority of county residents
- No delineated parking
- Few passive recreational opportunities (e.g., walking track, picnicking areas, unstructured play)
Pineora Ball Park

Pineora Ball Park is located just outside of Guyton, in the western part of the county. It features five (5) baseball/softball fields, a walking track, and a picnic shelter. While it is a large facility, its poor condition and limited parking does not allow for game-day use.

**Pros**

- Fields are fenced and lit
- Paved walking trail
- Shaded picnicking area

**Cons**

- Not centrally located to majority of county residents
- No delineated parking
- Outdated playground
- Turf/infields are worn
McCall Park

McCall Park is located in Rincon. It features two (2) baseball/softball fields and a playground.

Pros
- Shade around playground and pavilion
- Fields are fenced
- Playground is in good shape

Cons
- No buffer between park uses and neighboring auto body shop
- No delineated parking
- Turf/infields are worn

R.B. Baker Lake and Walking Trail

The R.B. Baker Lake and Walking Trail is located in Springfield and features a pond with a mile-long paved loop trail. It also has six (6) tennis courts and two (2) picnicking pavilions.

Pros
- Shade around playground and pavilions
- Tennis courts are regulation-sized and have windscreens
- Playground is in good shape
- Walking trail receives heavy use

Cons
- Tennis court surfacing is wearing around the edges and has some ponding
Veterans Park

Veterans Park is owned by the county, but was built and is maintained by a volunteer Board of Directors. It honors Effingham County veterans who have fought for their country as members of the military, as well as local freedom fighters and peacekeepers. The park includes a grassed mall, fountain, Wall of Veterans, an eternal flame, and various monuments. It is a passive park meant for reflection and celebration.

Clyo Community Center

The Clyo Community Center is the county's only park in the northern part of the county. It includes a community center, softball field, playground, basketball court, and picnicking pavilion.

Pros

- The center is in good shape
- The grass on the field is in good shape
- The playground is in good shape

Cons

- The infield needs to be redefined
- The basketball court should be surfaced and re-striped
Annex Ball Park

The Annex Ball Park is consists of a full-sized baseball field next to the Board of Education (BOE) offices. The BOE owns the property, but the Recreation Department uses and maintains the field. This field is used year-round.

**Pros**
- Fields are fenced and lit
- Parking is plentiful and easy to access

**Cons**
- The field is worn
- The fencing and structures are also old/worn

Ulmer Park

Ulmer Park is located adjacent to the county’s Administrative Complex in downtown Springfield. The park includes a 200-foot softball field, two (2) tennis courts, one basketball court, playground, and restrooms. The park property is owned by the City of Springfield, but the Effingham County Recreation and Parks Department maintains and uses the softball field.

**Pros**
- Field is in fair condition
- Field is lit

**Cons**
- The outfield is fenced with a temporary-style vinyl fence
- Limited parking
- Field is only large enough for softball or little league baseball
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Boat Landings

The county maintains five (5) public boat landings that allow access to both border rivers, the Ogeechee and the Savannah. Most of the landings provide only a parking area and a launch ramp.

Abercorn Boat Landing

Abercorn Boat Landing is located in Rincon and launches into Abercorn Creek, which leads into the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge and into the Savannah River.

Long Bridge Boat Landing

Long Bridge Boat Landing is also located in Rincon and launches into Ebenezer Creek. Ebenezer Creek eventually feeds into the Savannah River.

Steel Bridge Boat Landing

Steel Bridge Boat Landing is located where SR119 crosses into Bulloch County. The Landing provides access directly onto the Ogeechee River. Along with the boat launch, a beach area and restrooms are available at this landing.

Tommy Long Boat Landing

Tommy Long Boat Landing also launches into Ebenezer Creek, downstream from the Long Bridge Boat Landing. Tommy Long also includes restrooms, which are in poor shape.

Tuckasee King Boat Landing

Tuckasee King Boat Landing launches into a tributary of the Savannah only a few hundred feet from the outlet to the river. The landing also includes a playground and restrooms. This landing and its amenities are in good condition.

Joint-Use School Facilities

The county has an agreement with the Effingham County Board of Education to use gymnasiums after school hours at the following facilities:

- Blandford Elementary School
- Board of Education Offices
- Central Learning Center
- Guyton Elementary School
- Marlow Elementary School
- Rincon Elementary School
4.0 Current Trends and Similar Communities

4.1 Current Trends

Unlike transportation or wastewater system plans, parks planning cannot be undertaken by merely estimating demand. Market research is one of the most important considerations for parks planning, as market trends help determine how popular and heavily used a facility is likely to be. This section discusses demographic trends, how park users’ tastes in leisure facilities are changing and what cities and counties are doing to keep up with these changes.

Population Growth

Population growth has implications for all public services, but in particular recreation programs and facilities. Georgia’s statewide population is expected to grow by an additional 1.7 million residents by 2025. As discussed previously, Effingham County is expected to see a population increase of almost seventeen thousand in the same time period. Ensuring that there are sufficient facilities for all residents will continue to be a challenge.

Aging of the Population

The coming wave of retired baby boomers will affect everything from the need for new facilities, to what those facilities look like, to who runs them. Table 8 provides a breakdown of county population data by age group from 2000 to 2010. The table shows a growing pre-retirement age bracket of the population. A majority of this population could enter retirement during the life of this Facilities Plan. According to the 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan, it is projected that by 2030, 20 percent of the entire US population will be 65 years or older.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>2857</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>3668</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 19</td>
<td>9368</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>12754</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 44</td>
<td>14146</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>17514</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>-4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 – 64</td>
<td>8148</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>13551</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>+4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 &amp; Over</td>
<td>3016</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>4763</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>+1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Possible implications for parks agencies of a larger population of retirees include the need for expanded facilities overall, since retirees have more leisure time and are more likely to be interested in the health benefits of recreation facilities than the population as a whole. Additionally, retirees are more likely to be interested in fitness and nutrition programs, walking and hiking paths, and outdoor gardens and open space. As the population ages, the accessibility of park facilities will become more important: paved trails that can accommodate people with limited mobility are likely to become vital.

The retirement of a large number of workers will also leave gaps in park departments’ “institutional memories,” as retirees take years of management knowledge with them. Replacing workers and park managers with qualified staff is likely to be an issue in coming years.
**Health Trends**

Over the last few decades, the nation as a whole has become increasingly less healthy. Poor eating habits, a majority middle class with professions that keep them in an office all day, and a generally sedentary lifestyle have all contributed to a decline in the population’s wellbeing, and Georgia residents are no exception. The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion maintains a “Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System” which tracks health trends in each state. Table 9 below provides data gleaned from this system for Georgia and Effingham County residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9 - Health Trends</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
<th>Savannah District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any kind of health care coverage?</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you smoke?</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have diabetes?</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you obese?</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion and Georgia Department of Health “Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System” data centers.*

As seen in Table 9, nearly a third of the Savannah District residents are obese, many of whom lead a completely sedentary lifestyle. In addition, a quarter of District residents smoke, yet a majority of the population considers itself to be in good or bet better health. This points to a trend not just within the County but throughout the state that shows that while the majority of residents have some form of health insurance coverage, not as many people visit the doctor regularly and might not be aware of the state of their health.

Increasingly, parks and recreation facilities are viewed as connected to health. As the 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan states: “With exploding health-care costs and the prevalence of chronic disease, prevention programs are gaining more attention and surfacing in recreation programs across the nation.” Researchers have recommended that parks and recreation agencies do more to emphasize the health benefits of their programs and consider their role as contributing to overall public health.

This affects both what parks and recreation agencies offer and how they market their programs. In a recent survey of more than 2,000 public and private recreation facility providers (“State of the Industry”, Recreation Management, June 2008), concern over how well their facilities and programs are marketed emerged as the number three issue, in spite of the fact that most respondents do not anticipate that participation rates will fall. Agencies are interested in expanding their role in public life, providing a variety of programs, facilities and services and in making sure that people of all ages are aware of them. There is an increasing awareness that getting kids and teenagers involved in parks programs requires both upgrading facilities to reflect changes in what people are doing for fun and making sure that local youth are aware of these improvements.

**New Programs, Amenities and Facilities**

Progressively more people across the nation have an increasing interest in learning individual sports, such as rock climbing, kayaking and trail-oriented activities. In the past, “sports” were thought of as team sports, like baseball, basketball and football. While these sports continue to be very popular, the number of people cycling, jogging, and walking has increased dramatically in recent years. Skate parks have become a standard part of the public parks program in many parts of the country, as have splash parks, mountain biking courses and t’ai chi classes.
Recreation Management’s “State of the Industry” survey for 2014 includes the top 10 programs respondents are planning to offer in the next three years. They are:

1. Fitness programs
2. Educational programs
3. Active older adult programming
4. Holiday events and other special events
5. Mind-body/balance programs, such as yoga, Pilates and martial arts
6. Teen programming
7. Sports tournaments or races
8. Day camps and summer camps
9. Adult sports teams
10. Environmental education

Below is a list of planned park amenities according to the “State of the Industry” survey and recreation amenities that are currently most in demand.

1. Splash play areas
2. Synthetic turf sports fields
3. Playgrounds
4. Park structures, such as shelters
5. Trails
6. Disc golf courses
7. Bleachers and seating
8. Fitness centers
9. Concession areas
10. Dog parks

Many colleges, municipal parks and recreation departments and school districts are also planning on adding synthetic turf to their sports fields. Soccer and football fields are the most popular uses for turf, but part of its attraction is that it allows multi-sport use in the same general footprint as a single natural turf field. A synthetic turf field does not have to be rested between uses, allowing virtually constant use. As park managers anticipate increasing use rates, this durability becomes a major advantage. The proposed centralized park would be a facility that would benefit greatly from the installation of a synthetic turf field, possibly as part of a stadium for tournaments.

As preferences and demographics change, public parks and recreation facilities face pressure to keep pace or become obsolete. Added to this is the need to maintain facilities built during previous periods of population expansion. More than a third of those participating in the survey referenced above said that they were planning to build entirely new facilities. A third also said that they are planning to expand existing facilities. Nearly half said they were planning renovations. The average cost anticipated for new facilities was nearly $4.5 million, an 8.6 percent increase over the average reported by those responding to a similar survey in 2013.

**Fiscal Conditions**

For the near term, concerns about rising expenditures and limited revenues are likely to be an especially important concern for parks and recreation departments across the country. While revenues may not fall, increases are unlikely to keep pace with the pressure to expand and market facilities and programs. Municipalities are likely to continue using existing facilities to their fullest capacity, partnering with school districts and not-for-profit organizations, and engaging the increasing numbers of retirees in volunteer positions, as well as looking for new funding strategies.
The Recreation Management survey found the national average of reported annual operating expenditures for parks and recreation providers to be $1.431 million in the 2013 fiscal year. This average was down from the previous year's expenditures of $1.456 million, with municipal parks and recreation departments still feeling the repercussions of the economic recession. Survey respondents anticipated that their expenditures would increase by an average of 1.3 percent in 2014, and an additional increase to $1.515 million in 2015. Broken down by region, the South Atlantic states had slightly higher averages: $1.533 million in average expenditures in 2013, anticipated to increase to $1.561 million in 2015.

4.2 Benchmarking

In order to place Effingham County’s parks and recreation program in a larger context, the planning process included an assessment of nearby municipalities’ programs. For this study, Bryan and Bulloch Counties were chosen as appropriate comparable communities due to their proximity to Effingham County, their similar populations, and their comparable urban/suburban/rural mix.

Table 10 provides summary statistics for these two counties and Effingham County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Population 2013</th>
<th>Land Area (sq mi)</th>
<th>Persons Per Sq Mi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>33,157</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulloch</td>
<td>71,214</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effingham</td>
<td>54,456</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The data on total and per capita parks and recreation expenditures provided in Table 11 is drawn from Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports for each County discussed above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
<th>Total Expenditures</th>
<th>Per Capita Expenditures</th>
<th>Park Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>$63,818</td>
<td>$1,133,711</td>
<td>$34.19</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulloch</td>
<td>$34,403</td>
<td>$4,211,240</td>
<td>$59.14</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effingham</td>
<td>$62,953</td>
<td>$2,092,955</td>
<td>$38.43</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 11 shows, the three (3) counties have several similarities as well as some significant differences when it comes to population and park expenditures. Bryan County, to the south, has similar land area, median household income, and per capita expenditures as Effingham County. The almost twenty-thousand person difference in population can be attributed to almost half of the county being taken up by the U.S. Army’s Fort Stewart. Fort Stewart bisects the county into one northern section and one southern section. These two concentrations of development can also explain the seemingly smaller overall expenditures on parks and recreation programs when compared to the larger park acreage that Bryan County maintains. The parks and recreation facilities in the county are limited to a handful of concentrated facilities in the two populated areas of the county. With concentrated facilities comes concentrated maintenance and building costs, as parks employees and maintenance crews do not have to travel to far-off parks on a daily basis.

By contrast, Bulloch County, to the west of Effingham County, has a much larger population and total parks expenditure, with a significantly smaller median household income. All of these discrepancies can be explained by the presence of Georgia Southern University in the Statesboro area. The University has a student population of approximately 20,500, most of whom have low or no levels of income as they are full-time students. This would explain the larger population with a significantly lower median household income. This population of mostly younger, more active residents would also put a higher demand on parks facilities. This demand is met by the University’s tax burden to the county, which can help create and maintain more parks and recreation facilities, hence the larger total expenditures in Bulloch County.
5.0 Recommendations

As ECRP looks to fulfill the needs of the community it serves, Effingham County needs to rethink the way it serves its citizens. We recommend that the County focus on increasing programs that have proven popular, reestablishing a strong Recreation and Parks Department voice in County government, and increasing utilization of park facilities by a larger majority of the community. As always, it is important to address concerns and exceed expectations.

Because most of the County's recreation programs and facilities are available to the citizens at little or no cost, partnering with other organizations is essential to make the best use of the ECRP budget. Opportunities include additional partnering with the Board of Education (with which the Department already has some agreements) to expand facilities sharing and co-locate new facilities, programming and staffing. Another potential partner would be the City of Rincon, particularly when it comes to attracting large-group tournaments, as both entities would benefit greatly from tourist dollars and increased visibility in the region. There are also opportunities with the City of Springfield, City of Guyton, and with local churches for programming and outreach potential to citizens who might not be familiar with all of the ECRP programs offered.

5.1 Guiding Principles

During the initial stages of investigation for the master plan it was noted that overall, the county’s parks and recreation facility network needed improvements in the areas of safety, accessibility, sustainability (long-term usage) and appropriateness (relative to materials). The recommendations provided in this master plan will be based on a series of “Guiding Principles” that pertain to these topics. These principles are listed below:

Safety

Facilities should be safe for all who use them and should be planned and designed in accordance with applicable codes and guidelines, including:

- Effingham County Ordinances
- Georgia State Minimum Standard Building Code
- Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)
- Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)
- International Playground Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA)
- National Federation of High Schools (NFHS)
- Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)

Facilities should also be adequately policed to maintain a safe and secure environment for all users.

Accessibility

Facilities should be accessible to all who wish to use them, and interconnected to each other where possible. Parks should contain the following:

- Coherent, accessible circulation systems that connect major points of interest within the park and major points of interest surrounding the park.
- All outdoor recreational facilities should be accessible without restriction.
- Conflicts should be minimized by locating circulation systems with negligible disturbance to existing natural and cultural features.
- To the extent practical, logical and accessible pedestrian/bicycle connections between facilities should be provided with the intent of developing a unified county-wide “system” of interconnected recreational spaces. These connections should be coordinated with the Effingham County Multi-Modal Transportation Study.

- Conflicts should be minimized by locating circulation systems with adequate buffers from vehicular traffic.

- A uniform system of way-finding/informational signage should be created for all facilities that provides patron orientation, identifies major points of interest, and interprets unique attributes of each facility with clarity, as appropriate. Sign types may include: entrance signs, information kiosks/map, location signs, interpretive signs, directional signs, etc.

**Sustainability**

Improvements to facilities should be undertaken with a “long-term” sustainable view, using suitable materials with proven performance characteristics. Appropriate levels of long-term maintenance should be planned as part of the capital improvement strategy. In addition, the county should:

- Develop performance standards and/or guidelines for specific types of facility construction to ensure that property materials are installed in a proper manner.
- State-of-the-art design and installation methods and materials should be considered (LEED, LID).
- Consider Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) for development of non-building sites.
- Ensure that routine maintenance costs for new facilities are included in Capital Improvement Project (CIP) planning. These costs often exceed original construction costs for certain types of facilities, in the long term.
- Maintain facilities in a clean and neat condition. Dedicate maintenance staff to routine “broken window” type tasks (e.g., litter removal, touch-up painting, etc.).

**Appropriateness**

Finish materials specified for facility improvements should be appropriate to their level of intended use. This includes:

- Accessible surface materials that should be installed at facility entrances and accessible routes. Accessible routes should connect to primary picnic pavilions, restrooms, and major points of interest, as appropriate. Consult the “ADA-ABA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities” for additional requirements.
- Uniform county-wide standards for site furnishings (benches, tables, trash receptacles, grills, etc.). Furnishings should be constructed of durable materials, anchored to an appropriate base flush with surrounding finished grade, and placed at strategic points throughout each facility.
- Picnic shelters may vary in size, depending on the quantity of patrons served and shelter context. Shelters should be accessible, constructed of durable materials, have a power source (GFI) and a durable roof covering with overhangs. Shelters should be located at appropriate points at each facility and should be designed with consideration of the unique aspects of the facility's context and theme. Large shelters for group gatherings should be located in close proximity to parking facilities.
- Athletic facilities should be designed for the appropriate age level of use (competition vs. practice), based upon Facility Design/Performance Standards that are developed as part of this Master Plan. Fields should be graded, topsoiled, and irrigated as needed to allow for maximum drainage and grass retention.
5.2 System-wide Improvements

Trails and Bicycle Paths

To encourage multiple modes of transportation and increase physical activity for residents, non-vehicular paths and trails should be considered to connect the existing and proposed parks to each other. The MMTS Proposed Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements plans previously discussed and found in Appendix A provide initial direction on a county-wide basis for the location of new and expanded routes for non-vehicular users. In addition to these large-scale plans, sidewalks and multi-use trails can be incorporated into concentrated areas such as Springfield to connect smaller parks that are all within walking distance of each other.

Along with parks interconnectivity, trails and walking paths can be incorporated into existing parks to encourage more passive activity. Walking tracks around athletic fields are relatively simple and inexpensive to construct and allow for parents and spectators of sporting events to keep moving during events. Walking tracks and trails can also be built into pieces of land that aren't generally available for other types of development due to setbacks, easements, and other restrictions. These trails can also usually be fit between other fields and structures to allow for increased usability on a site with minimal impact and expense.

Signage

Nothing can be as important as first impressions to out of town visitors attending an event in a county park. Being able to find the park and then being able to quickly find the shelter or ballfield they are going to can leave a lasting positive impression on visitors returning for future tournaments and events. The signage system should be affordable, easy to maintain, easy to change information, and fit the aesthetics of the community.

Currently, most of the county parks include a brick entrance signholder, but no sign is included (as seen to the right). A standardized sign should be developed to be attached to the existing signholders, as well as new full entrance signs added at any other parks that have no signs at all. A common color scheme and text style should be used for all entrance signs, as well as for intra-park directional signage. In addition to the color and text scheme, a new Recreation and Parks logo could be developed and incorporated into all of the entrance signs.

Directional signage within the park can be simple single-post directional markers or more elaborate double-post boards. Examples are shown to the right. Directional signage should lead drivers to drop-off and parking areas, as well as lead pedestrians to various sports fields, picnic shelters, trails, and other amenities. The various fields, shelters, and trails should also be labeled so that they are easily found and recognized.
5.3 Existing Park Improvements

SR119 Recreation Complex
- Renovate fixtures and finishes in the restroom/concession building
- Renovate existing gym and expand to include additional court

Sand Hill Complex
- Repair septic system
- Add netting to backstops for (5) baseball/softball fields
- Replace dirt infields and irrigation on (5) baseball/softball fields
- Install (3) new lighted and covered batting cages
- Install new 30’ x 50’ maintenance building
- Widen concrete plaza around the scoring tower to 30’
- Install new landscaping and signage
- Enlarge women’s restroom into existing storage room(s) to add 3-4 new stalls

Central Learning Center
- Repair and refinish wood basketball court
Ulmer Park

- Repair baseball field fence
- Repair batting cage fence and netting
- Repair and repaint the seating covers
- Install a roof on each dugout
- Repair the infield
- Repair outfield grass as needed

5.4 New Centralized Park

As discussed in the Needs Assessment and through County input, a new park is required to meet the expanding needs of the fast-growing population. This park should be more centralized to the population than the Sand Hill Complex so as to not duplicate services in one geographic area and also to be easier to access for more residents. Figure 4 in Section 2.0 Needs Assessment suggests that this park should be located in the central to eastern portion of the County. There are generally two approaches to development of this new centralized park. One approach would be to acquire additional property around the SR119 Recreation Complex and expand the park into this new property. The alternative approach would be to acquire (via purchase or donation) new land that is preferably within the area shown in Figure 4.

Based primarily on the current and projected usage of the ECRP programs, the following facilities are proposed for the new park:

- Gymnasium with (2) regulation-size basketball courts
- (9) Baseball/Softball fields with variable base configurations, lighted and with covered bleachers, in the following sizes:
  - (2) 335’ outfield with 90’ maximum bases
  - (2) 315’ outfield with 90’ maximum bases
  - (2) 315’ outfield with 80’ maximum bases
  - (3) 225’ outfield with 70’ maximum bases
- (2) 160’x360’ Football fields, lighted
- (2) 225’x360’ Soccer fields, lighted
- (4) Batting cages, lighted
- (2) Central baseball scoring tower, restroom and concession buildings
  - Restrooms in the first building to include:
    - (1) stall each - men/women - with AC to remain open at all times
    - (2) urinals, (3) stalls - men - with AC and tile for game times
    - (10) stalls - women - with AC and tile for game times
  - Restrooms in the second building to have AC and tile, to be only open during game times and should include:
    - (2) urinals, (3) stalls - men
    - (5) stalls - women
- Restroom/concession building at the rectangular fields
- (3) Multi-table picnic shelters
  - (2) within the baseball/softball fields
  - (1) near the rectangular fields
  - (1) near the playgrounds
(1) Large playground with ADA features, fenced
• Maintenance storage building

Currently, based on feedback from County staff, the availability of land around the SR119 Recreation Complex is limited to an adjacent parcel to the east. As such, based on our space estimates for the above list of amenities, an expanded SR119 site would still not provide enough space to meet the County’s needs for a centralized complex. At the Public Workshop on September 9, 2014, an approximately 72-acre site owned by the Bank of Newington was identified as an alternative site for the new centralized complex. That site is located on the south side of Hwy 21 approximately one mile east of the Laurel Street/Hwy 21 intersection. As one major intended use for the new park will be to host tournaments and special events, the ideal new park location would have access to a major arterial roadway or highway to make it easy for visitors to find. The Bank of Newington property would meet that criteria and would have sufficient space to contain the above list of amenities.

5.5 Upgrade Options

In addition to the recommendations discussed above, there are also upgrade options if funding becomes available.

New Centralized Park

• 6’ wide stone dust walking trail
• Dog park
• Splash pad
• Skate park
• Community center with large meeting hall and kitchen, and 4 smaller meeting rooms
• Formalize parking areas with edging and gravel pavement
• Upgrade one rectangular field to a multi-use synthetic turf field
• Upgrade one or more baseball fields to synthetic turf

Other County Parks

• Install entry signage at all parks and add directional signage as needed
• Provide ADA-compliant playgrounds at Sand Hill and R.B. Baker, and at other parks as needed
6.0 Implementation Plan

6.1 Phasing Plan

The following Phasing Plan focuses on the phased development of the new centralized complex. County staff, the Recreation Board, the Board of Commissioners and the public all agreed during the second public workshop on November 4, 2014 that the primary focus of this Implementation Plan should be the development of the new centralized complex. The other recommended improvements at the County’s existing recreation facilities will be accomplished over time through the use of impact fees and the normal ECRP annual budgeting process for facility maintenance funds.

In Effingham County, SPLOST programs are the most efficient way to get funding for capital projects. As such, the following phasing plan takes into account current SPLOST monies, along with proposed budgets for the next two SPLOST cycles. We have provided a preliminary opinion of probable construction cost in today’s (2015) dollars for the major components in each phase based on conversations with the County and CHA’s experience on current and previous projects. In addition, Figure 6 is a rendering of the new recreation complex on the Bank of Newington property (discussed in Section 5.4) that shows how the various components of the new recreation complex will be phased in over time.

Phase 1

Athletic fields: $1,923,000.00
(2) 335’ Baseball with 90’ bases, lighted
(3) 225’ Softball with 70’ bases, lighted
(2) Batting Cages with pitching machines, lighted
Covered bleachers for all baseball/softball fields, (2) per field

Structures: $1,830,000.00
Gymnasium (2-court)
Pressbox, Restrooms and Concessions at baseball/softball complex
Maintenance Storage Building

Play amenities: $275,000.00
Large playground - including ADA features, fenced

Infrastructure: $351,000.00
Parking - paved, 400 spaces
Signage and Landscaping
Lightning prediction and warning system

Sitework allowance – mass clearing, grading, utilities, etc. – 25 acres $1,200,000.00
Soft Costs - design, geotechnical investigation, survey, etc. $558,000.00

Total Phase 1 Park Costs: $6,337,000.00

Phase 2

Athletic fields:
(2) 315’ baseball with 90’ bases, lighted
(2) 315’ softball with 80’ bases, lighted
Covered bleachers for all baseball/softball fields, (2) per field
(2) Batting Cages with pitching machines, lighted
(1) 160’x360’ Football, lighted
(1) 225'x360' Soccer, lighted
Structures:
    Pressbox, concessions, and restrooms at baseball/softball fields
(2) Picnic Pavilions
Infrastructure:
    Additional Parking - paved, 400 spaces
    Signage and Landscaping
Sitework allowance – mass clearing, grading, utility connections, etc. – 30 acres
Soft Costs – design, geotechnical investigation, survey, etc.

**Total Phase 2 Park Costs:** $5,884,000.00

Phase 3
Athletic fields:
    (1) 160'x360' Football, lighted
    (1) 225'x360' Soccer, lighted
Structures:
    Concessions and restrooms at football/soccer fields
    Picnic Pavilion
Infrastructure:
    Additional Parking - paved, 141 spaces
    Signage and Landscaping
Sitework allowance – mass clearing, grading, utility connections, etc. – 20 acres
Soft Costs – design, geotechnical investigation, survey, etc.

**Total Phase 3 Park Costs:** $2,512,000.00

Optional Amenities (as funding and space allows)
- Dog Park
- Splash Pad
- Skate Park
- 6’ wide stone dust trail, (1) mile
- Community Center with meeting rooms and kitchen

**Total Optional Amenities:** $2,854,400.00
6.2 Maintenance & Operations

Maintenance is an issue with all of the County's parks. SPLOST funding will provide some new equipment for maintaining turf and grading baseball fields, however maintenance needs to become a focal point for ECRP in the County's annual budget. Parks should not be expanded without also expanding the budget for maintenance if the County is ever to realize their goal of elevating the park system to a top tier system for the State of Georgia.

A system that has worked well for other departments around the state is to have staff and equipment based out of major parks. Instead of being centrally located and trying to serve all of the parks out of one location, each community park would have a maintenance facility located in an out-of-the-way location with mowers, edgers and other needed equipment as well as assigned staff. While initially increasing costs for additional maintenance and equipment, the advantages include less time spent on fuel and time for travel around the county. This also allows for staff to visit each park daily to become fully acquainted with the functions of the park as well the troubled areas needing close attention. By having staff at the park each day, the county also has more eyes and ears on site which also has the side benefit of addressing vandalism and other crime-related activities.

The staff should be led by a highly trained expert in athletic field maintenance and irrigation and licensed to use insecticides and herbicides, etc. Electricians and other specialized maintenance staff could still work from a central location.
Appendix A

MMTS Proposed Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plans
Figure 6.3

Legend

- Existing and Proposed Bicycle and Multi-Use Facilities
  - Project Number
  - Bicycle Route Number
  - Existing State Bicycle Route
  - Existing County Bicycle Lanes
  - Planned Multi-Use Path
  - Proposed Multi-Use Path
  - Proposed Bicycle Lanes
  - Proposed White Shoulder Lane
- Road Network
  - Interstate (Outside Effingham County)
  - Other State Route / U.S. Highway
  - Other Roads
- Other Layers
  - Schools (K-12)
  - Elementary School = Red
  - Middle School = Orange
  - High School = Yellow
  - Parks
  - Landings
- Effingham County Boundary
- Other County Boundary
- City Limits
- Water
- Fort Stewart Military Reservation
- Conservation Areas
- Railroads

Source: GDOT, Effingham County, and Jacobs Carter Burgess

This map is intended for planning purposes only.
Proposed Pedestrian Improvements

Guyton Inset
Develop Local Sidewalk Plan

Springfield Inset
Develop Local Sidewalk Plan

Figure 6.4
Legend

- Multi-Use Trails and Sidewalks
  - Project Number:
  - Multicue Parks:
  - Sidewalks (both sides):
  - Sidewalks (one side):

Pedestrian Needs Analysis
- Elementary Schools
- Middle Schools
- High Schools
- Libraries
- Parks
- Landing
- City Hall
- Police Department
- Post Office
- Community or Senior Center
- Park & Ride Lot

Road Network
- Interstate (outside Effingham County)
- Other State Routes
- U.S. Highway
- Other Roads

Other Layers
- Effingham County Boundary
- Other County Boundary
- City Limits
- Water
- Fort Stewart Military Reservation
- Conservation Areas
- Railroads

Source: GDOT, Effingham County, and Jacobs Carter Burgess
This map is intended for planning purposes only.
Appendix B

*Virginia Outdoors Plan 2007 “Appendix C”*
Appendix C. Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation Planning

Because each locality has unique resources, conditions, and issues, guidelines for recreational and open space planning must be evaluated in terms of the local situation. Guidelines must be used judiciously as basic norms, subject to modification as local needs arise.

Although it is impossible to settle on just one precise definition for the word “recreation,” most would agree that leisure plays a major role in an individual’s level of life satisfaction. Whether persons choose to define themselves by the sheer rock face they climb with grace and precision or leave behind the turmoil of daily routine with a contemplative walk in the forest, the physical and psychological benefits of recreation are endless. Herein lies the value of parks and open space to communities.

Planning guidelines and considerations

The 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan addresses several basic categorical areas important to the planning process: area guidelines, space guidelines, capacity guidelines, design guidelines, maintenance guidelines, and playground guidelines. These categories were selected based on the experience and observation of professional planners and park and recreation researchers. They represent reasonable and applicable guidelines for conditions within the Commonwealth. In addition, the concept of sustainable design has recently been developed to recognize the relationship of human civilization to the natural world.

Explanations of the categories mentioned above, along with descriptions of other related terms, are provided herein for users of the Virginia Outdoors Plan. It is important to note that many states and professional recreation planners are relying less on standards because they have found so many exceptions to measures used in the past. Every situation is a little different and the user of the following should not consider the information to be the final word on how much of any facility or area a population of any given size should have available. Trends in participation rates can greatly affect demand in any given activity, making standards of questionable value in determining needs.

Quality of the experience

The quality of the visitor’s experience is often overlooked in the planning process, but it is an essential factor in the development and design of recreation facilities, areas and open space. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) devised by the United States Department Agriculture Forest Service addresses the concept of user experience and the correlation to recreation planning as follows: “The basic assumption underlying the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum is that options to realize the number of recreational experiences sought by users are best assured by providing a diverse set of recreation opportunities. A recreation opportunity is a chance for a person to engage in a specific recreation activity within a specific environmental setting to realize a predictable recreation experience. Thus, the ROS conceives the recreation management and planning task as a behaviorally-based production process, with three distinct aspects of demand that must be considered.”

- “First, visitors seek opportunities to participate in certain activities.”
- “Second, visitors seek certain settings in which they can recreate.”
- “The third aspect of demand is “desired experiences,” which is a product of providing the second.”

“In offering diverse settings where participants can pursue various activities, the broadest range of experiences can be realized. The task of the recreation planner and manager, then, is to formulate various combinations of activity and set opportunities to facilitate the widest possible achievements of desired experiences – or to preserve options for various types of recreation opportunities." To accomplish this, consider the following points in devising an effective recreation/park plan:

- When possible, go beyond the demand/supply/needs assessment of the locality, and approach the community for input on what opportunities they would like to see developed in their area.
- Think about what kind of experiences you want to provide for users and incorporate that experience into the planning process.
- Conduct a detailed assessment of the natural resources that will be used to put the plan into action, and let the capability/condition of the land dictate the planning goals.

2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan
Appendices 659
Appendix C. Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation Planning

- One consideration that is not addressed by current planning processes is the benefit of large, undeveloped tracts of land being allocated for the “wilderness/primitive experience.” As the Virginia’s population continues to grow and urban development progresses, it is more important than ever to insure that open space free of parking lots and swimming pools is available for future generations. The benefits of wilderness trails and natural settings, particularly in urban/rural areas, are boundless and should be planned for.

While the goal of the recreationist is to obtain satisfying experiences, the goal of the recreation resource manager becomes one of providing the opportunities for obtaining these experiences. By managing the natural resource setting, and the activities that occur within it, the manager is providing the opportunities for recreation experiences to take place. Therefore, for both the manager and the recreationist, recreation opportunities can be expressed in terms of three principal components: the activities, the setting and the experiences.

For management and conceptual convenience, possible mixes or combinations of activities and settings and probable experience opportunities have been arranged along a spectrum, or continuum. This continuum is called the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and is divided into six classes. The six classes, or portions along the continuum, and the accompanying class names have been have been selected and conventionalized because of their descriptiveness and utility in land and resource management planning and other management applications.

Each class is defined in terms of its combination of activity, setting and experience opportunities. Subclasses may be established to reflect local or regional conditions as long as aggregations can be made back to the six major classes for regional or national summaries. An example of a subclass may be further breakdown of “Roaded Natural” into subclasses based on paved, oiled or dirt surfaced roads, which in turn reflects amount of use, or a further breakdown of “Primitive” based upon aircraft or boat use.

Table A-1 describes the general environmental and societal settings that are outlined in the ROS. When a specific activity and desired experience is matched with the appropriate setting, the environmental planner is then able to design an area that will fulfill the expectation of the user.

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum provides a framework for stratifying and defining classes of outdoor recreation opportunity environments. As conceived, the spectrum has application to all lands regardless of ownership or jurisdiction. Its use in the national forest system will facilitate the consideration, determination and implementation of the recreation management role.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A-1. Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) Setting Characterization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prismatic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area is characterized by essentially unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Interaction between users is very low and evidence of others is minimal. The area is managed to be essentially free from evidence of human-induced restrictions and controls. Motorized use within the area is not permitted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C. Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation Planning

For more information on the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), contact the Forest Service at:

USDA Forest Service
George Washington and Jefferson National Forests
5162 Valleypointe Parkway
Roanoke, VA 24019-3050

Area guidelines

Area guidelines are used to determine the number of acres of recreational and park lands needed by a locality. These guidelines are usually expressed as a minimum number of acres per 1,000 people in the population.

The recommended area guideline for local recreation and park sites in Virginia is 10 acres per 1,000 people, which represents a minimum acreage that should be exceeded when possible. Though this recommendation is sufficient for the inventory and development of parks in rural and less densely populated areas, it is more difficult to meet this standard in an urban setting. Where you have more extensive development, higher population numbers in a small area, and a lack of available and affordable open space, recreational development must be planned to accommodate the needs of as large and diverse a user group as possible. It is important to disperse park opportunities evenly throughout the locality so that each sector has convenient access to parks and open space. The planning and development process should also provide for as many different kinds of activities as the resources will allow.

Another crucial factor that must be incorporated into the demand-supply-needs inventory equation is the existence and accessibility to private facilities such as schools, churches, and clubs. Though these facilities play an important part in accommodating the recreation needs of a community, planners must also note that these facilities are not available to everyone at all times. They are not accessible during normal operating hours, and if a membership is required, the user group is restricted to organization members. If the needs identified by the community are not met by the existing publicly accessible facilities, then local planners must devise options for meeting those needs.

In meeting the 10 acres per 1,000 people area standard, planners should consider three major local park classifications — the neighborhood park, the community park, and the district park. Each of these park categories has its own unique function and service radius within the locality. Frequently, local government will interchange the names of the park types, but their functions within the locality remain unchanged. Table A-2 summarizes area guidelines for each park type.

Space guidelines

Space guidelines deal with actual site planning and give the amount of land or water necessary for a particular activity, e.g., the number of square feet needed for a tennis court or acres needed for a football field. These guidelines are usually constant and not subject to variation.

Capacity and space guidelines are presented in Tables A-3. These guidelines determine the amount of land or water required to accommodate a particular activity within a park complex and determine how many people can be accommodated during an average day, week or season. To reiterate, an assessment of the existing resources should be conducted, the development plan should be shaped to accommodate as many types of opportunities as possible, and the natural layout of the resources or landscape should be utilized in developing appropriate opportunities. The tables show the capacity and space guidelines for the most popular types of outdoor recreational activities in the Commonwealth.

Capacity guidelines

Capacity guidelines relate to the instant, daily or seasonal capacity of a particular recreational facility. They aid in the development of management plans and/or determinations of facility adequacy to meet local needs. When the capacity standard of a particular facility is known, the planner can

### Table A-2. Park Area Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Radius</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Acres/1,000</td>
<td>Urban/Suburban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Minimum Size (Acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 Miles</td>
<td>1 – 1½ Miles</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground or Playlot</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2 Miles</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 Mile</td>
<td>3 – 7 Miles</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Park</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 – 7 Miles</td>
<td>10 – 15 Miles</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Park</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>25 Miles</td>
<td>25 Miles</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Park</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 Hour</td>
<td>50 Miles</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Recommended Acres/1,000 Population: 20

* Considered at a variable rate over and above local area standard.
then determine (based on local demand) how many facilities are needed. Capacity guidelines are subject to variations depending on the quality of the facility and its management, e.g., a night-lighted ball field has a greater daily capacity than an unlit field. Many localities are constructing rectangular multi-purpose fields that are lighted and have all weather surfaces. These large fields can be used for multiple activities such as soccer, football, lacrosse, field hockey, rugby, and many other activities. The daily capacity of such a field changes depending on how it is configured and which sports are being played.

Two additional facets of carrying capacity that affect the user’s experience and the resources themselves are physical and social carrying capacity. Physical carrying capacity relates to the maximum use that a recreation area can sustain without resource degradation. It correlates also to maintenance guidelines discussed further in this section, and it is imperative to the upkeep and preservation of existing resources. It is possible to increase the physical carrying capacity of an area by hardening defined impact areas for each activity.

Social carrying capacity relates to the user’s expectation of the type and quality of recreation experience they are hoping to have. This is a very important consideration in the design and development of recreation and open space resources. In order to maximize satisfaction of the user, it is imperative to design the area or facility so as to provide the most appropriate environment for the activity at hand.

Social interaction level is an aspect of social carrying capacity that can be a determinant of the potential for user conflict in a recreation area. An example of user conflict between two substantially different users might be paddlers and personal watercraft (pwc) users; they are both using the same resources, but in very different ways. Their expectations for the experience, the environment in which they choose to participate, and the atmosphere that they create with respect to their level of presence are all factors that might contribute to user conflict.

For further information on the concept of user expectation, refer to the section above on “Quality of the Experience,” as well as the U.S.D.A. Forest Service’s Recreation Opportunity Spectrum model.

**Design guidelines**

The guidelines for designing park and open space areas are as varied and diverse as the resources that will support them. Depending on the kind of experience that is intended and the type of user to be served, there are many different sources for park and open space design guidelines. The schematic sketches in the latter part of this chapter will provide a brief overview of the size, service area, administrative responsibilities, purpose, character, location and potential facilities that might exist on various levels from a neighborhood playground or play lot to a state park.

A few key resources for park and open space are provided below:

**The Virginia Greenways and Trails Toolbox – Connecting Our Common Wealth**

**Department of Conservation and Recreation**

203 Governor Street, Suite 326
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 786-6124
www.dcr.virginia.gov

**National Recreation and Park Association**

22377 Belmont Ridge Road
Ashburn, VA 20148-4501
Phone: 703-858-0784 Fax: 703-858-0794
E-mail: info@nrpa.org

**USDA Forest Service**

George Washington and Jefferson National Forests
5162 Valleypointe Parkway
Roanoke, VA 24019-3050

**National Park Service**

U. S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street, Fifth Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 597-7013
www.nps.gov


Charles A. Flink; Kristine Olka; Robert M. Searns

**Rails-To-Trails Conservancy**

1100 17th Street, 10th Floor, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 331-9696
greenways@transact.org

**Maintenance guidelines**

Maintenance guidelines refer to the desired level of maintenance for recreation facilities and areas within a park system, as well as those activities or individual work elements that support maintenance requirements.

Despite the almost endless variety of tasks and methods associated with the upkeep of any system of outdoor recreational facilities, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has established a set of guidelines. *Park Maintenance Guidelines* (1986) was developed from years of research and evaluation. This document covers a multitude of maintenance levels, methods and practices. Due to its length and complexity, there is no attempt to summarize the document within the *Virginia Outdoors Plan*. However, copies may be obtained by writing the National Recreation and Parks Association, 22377 Belmont Ridge Road, Ashburn, VA 20148.
**Appendix C. Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation Planning**

### Playground guidelines

Playground guidelines are used to evaluate a playground to identify any features that could lead to an injury to a child. Playground guidelines address issues such as protective surfacing, head entrapment hazards, entanglement hazards and equipment location. These guidelines are designed for persons concerned with public playground safety.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimated that more than 70% of injuries on both public and home playground equipment resulted from falls, especially falls to the surface beneath the equipment. Other reasons for injuries included impact from moving equipment (13%), the majority of which involved children under the age of six, running or bumping into stationary equipment (5%), and contact with hazards such as protrusions, pinch points, sharp edges, and hot surfaces (7%). *(Playground Equipment Related Injuries and Deaths, April 1990, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207)*

An average of 15 playground-related deaths are reported each year, according to data from the CPSC, and more than 40% of these involve children under the age of six. Fatal injuries most often involved entanglement in ropes tied to or caught on equipment, falls, impacts from tip-overs or failures of equipment, impact with moving swings, and head entrapment *(Hazard Sketch: Playground Equipment-Related Injuries and Deaths, October 1996, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207)*.

In Virginia, more than 400 children under the age of 15 were hospitalized between 1994 and 1997 after falling from playground equipment. Costs associated with these hospitalizations totaled $1,858,289, or an average of $4600 per hospitalization *(Center for Injury and Violence Prevention, Virginia Department of Health)*.

### Sustainable design

Sustainable design is a concept that adds a holistic approach to societal growth. This concept proposes that in order to ensure that the well being of the natural world is not compromised in the face of development, it is important to plan communities in a manner that considers the value of natural heritage resources. From the revitalization of existing facilities in lieu of new development to designing neighborhoods so that open space is preserved, sustainable design recognizes the economic, environmental and social value of Virginia's natural resources. For an in-depth presentation on the concept of sustainable design, see Better Models for Development in Virginia – Ideas for Creating, Maintaining, and Enhancing Livable Communities by Edward T. McMahon with Sara S. Hollberg and Shelley Mastran.

In 1991, the National Park Service (NPS) developed guidelines and recommendations for incorporating principles of sustainable design regarding natural resources, cultural resources, site planning and design, architectural design, building ecology, interpretation, energy and utilities, waste disposal, and facilities maintenance and operation.

### Urban guidelines

One of the greatest challenges that urban planners and natural resource managers face is how to most effectively utilize available resources within an urban area to meet recreational and open space needs. When you consider the diverse activities that make up the recreation/leisure participation of the citizens in any one area, the task of providing resources to support these activities is daunting. From athletic fields that accommodate youth and adult sports to the undeveloped open space resources that are required for even a semi-wilderness experience, providing an outlet for these activities is no easy job. Maintenance and repair of fields and facilities, staffing constraints and budgetary issues are but a few of the barriers that must be overcome when attempting to accommodate the needs of many with limited resources.

In order to most efficiently utilize the locality's resources, it is essential to adopt a local comprehensive plan that considers demand placed on existing resources and an assessment of how these resources meet current and projected needs. Since available resources are as varied as the activities they support, the objective of the urban guidelines section of the Virginia Outdoors Plan is not to present the reader with a formula for comprehensive planning, but to provide sources for obtaining the information needed to effectively design an urban recreation plan.

The Fairfax County Park Authority has developed a planning process that is an exemplary model on how to effectively meet the recreation needs of a densely populated area. Though the plan is specific to the Northern Virginia metropolitan area, it does address the philosophy, considerations and issues that are associated with any successful comprehensive plan. The plan was developed from results of a demand survey directed to the urban population of Fairfax County. Survey feedback resulted in changed participation and space guidelines and the determination of sustainable carrying capacity guidelines to accommodate developed recreational activities. The planning process also developed criteria for identification and protection of significant and sensitive natural and cultural resources. These guidelines can be applicable to other urban areas in the Commonwealth. Contact the Fairfax County Park Authority, Division of Planning and Development, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035, for further information on the methodology and guidelines.

The following additional resources related to urban planning are provided for readers of the 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan*:

**American Planning Association**

122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600
Chicago, IL 60603
(312) 431-9100 (general)
(312) 786-6344 (Planning Advisory Service and Planners Book Service)
www.planning.org

The following pages contain schematic sketches of various parks and recreational sites and facilities typically found at each.
Neighborhood Playground or Playlot

Size
1/4 acre and larger

Service area
Approximately five minutes walking time

Administrative responsibility
Local government

Purpose
The primary function is to provide safe play areas for pre-school and school-age children, especially in high-density areas where backyard playgrounds may be unavailable. These parks, however, can sometimes be oriented toward adult needs.

Character
The character is one of intensive use and easy accessibility. Facilities should be designed to meet the needs of local residents. When serving children, these parks should be designed for active play, while those designed for adults should also include opportunities for passive recreation. Maintaining playground equipment is critical and should be considered in the planning stage. These areas are not normally designed for organized activities.

Location
Location is determined more by the availability of land or space than any other factor.

Potential facilities
- playgrounds
- horseshoe courts
- shuffleboard courts
- basketball courts
- volleyball courts
- badminton courts
Appendix C. Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation Planning

Neighborhood Park

Size
5-20 acres
Plan at 3 acres/1,000 population

Service area
Approximately 5-15 minutes walking distance or under one mile driving distance

Administrative responsibility
Local government

Purpose
The primary function is to provide limited types of recreation for the entire family within easy walking distance. Facilities should be provided for all age groups.

Character
Intensive use and easy access are characteristics of this classification. Ideally, the site should have level-to-gently rolling areas to accommodate intensive use facilities, with shaded areas for passive recreation.

Location
If possible, the neighborhood park should be located near a school and/or the neighborhood center and away from railroads, major streets and other hazardous areas.

Potential facilities
- playground
- picnic facilities
- tennis courts
- ball diamond
- horseshoe courts
- shuffleboard courts
- basketball courts
- football/soccer fields
- volleyball courts
- badminton courts
- walking trails
- fishing pond
- swimming pool
- bikeway
- recreation center

Playfields are usually dual purpose in this type of facility. They are areas for sports and running games and also serve as open space. Intensive use areas (the playground area and hard surface courts) are buffered from other activities by passive natural areas and pedestrian access corridors. Programmed activities, such as organized athletics, are often suitable in neighborhood parks. Although limited parking is provided, site design should encourage pedestrian access to the greatest extent possible.

Rural communities may want to consider including neighborhood park functions in larger community parks, which could better serve the needs of a widely dispersed local population. From an economic standpoint, it would be more beneficial for a rural locality to have a few strategically located, well-designed, larger facilities than to invest in several small sites and not have the funds to properly develop and maintain them.

Figure A-2. Neighborhood Park

2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan Appendices 665
Community Park

Size
20-50 acres
Plan at 3-acres/1,000 population

Service area
Approximately 15 minutes driving time

Administrative responsibility
Local government

Purpose
Community parks should primarily support active recreation-al activities and be capable of withstanding intensive use while still containing a fair amount of open space.

Character
The site usually varies from relatively flat open space to moderately sloping wooded areas. Such a park should be adaptable to a wide variety of recreational activities. Access is gained by auto, bicycles or walking.

Location
When possible, the community park should be located near the center of community with good access and service by a public transportation system.

Potential facilities
• playgrounds
• picnic facilities
• tennis courts
• ball diamonds
• horseshoe courts
• shuffleboard courts
• basketball courts
• volleyball courts
• football/soccer fields
• trails: walking, hiking, biking, fitness
• natural area
• fishing lake or stream access
• beach and swimming area
• swimming pool
• parking area
• recreation center

A multitude of activities must be provided by this intensive-use recreational facility. The recreation center is often the focal point of the park. Organized activities and supervised play are administered from this point. Other activities are grouped in the surrounding area. Their location depends on the natural terrain, need for control and vehicular access. Any existing natural qualities — topography, water features, trees, etc. — should be preserved as natural buffers between activity areas, as well as to protect the recreational environment from surrounding, incompatible influences. These natural elements also should be used to provide a space for more passive forms of recreation such as nature walks, picnicking and fishing.

In a rural setting, this park category may take the place of the neighborhood park. It can better serve a widely dispersed population than two or three smaller sites. Community parks, along with neighborhood parks (where applicable), usually meet most of the close-to-home recreational needs of most localities.
Appendix C. Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation Planning

District Park
(City or County)

Size
50-150 acres
Plan at 4-acres/1,000 population

Service area
15-25 minutes driving time
5-15 mile service radius

Administrative responsibility
Local government

Purpose
The district park should serve the recreational needs of large portions of the local population. It should contain a wide variety of intensively developed areas for day-use recreation, while providing ample open space with generous buffers between activity areas.

Character
The site can vary from flat open space to moderately or steeply sloping topography. It should be capable of supporting a wide variety of activities with ample buffer and natural areas. A stream, lake or tidal waterfront site is very desirable. The district park needs to be accessible by automobile, as well as by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Location
When possible, the district park should be located near the center of the service area. It should be on or near a major street that provides good access to the facility. In urban or suburban situations, easy access to mass transit is highly desirable. The site also should be accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Potential facilities
- playgrounds
- picnic facilities
- tennis courts
- ball diamonds
- horseshoe courts
- volleyball courts
- basketball courts
- recreation centers
- golf
- trails
- natural area
- lake or stream
- fishing/boating
- swimming pool and/or beach with a swimming area
- football/soccer fields
- parking areas
- shuffleboard courts

Figure A-4. District Park
Recreation Center

The recreation center may be found at neighborhood, community, district and large urban parks. At neighborhood parks, the center is usually 15,000 to 20,000 square feet. It generally will include multi-purpose rooms, arts and crafts area, game room, kitchen, lounge and lobby, restrooms, and office. If a gymnasium is not available in a neighborhood school, the recreation center also may include a gymnasium and locker room facilities.

The recreation center in a larger park serving a community, district or city will be considerably larger, from 20,000 to 80,000 square feet, and will include several multi-purpose rooms, gymnasium, child care facilities, aerobics room, racquetball courts, shower and locker rooms, game room, arts and craft area, auditorium or areas for performing arts, classrooms, concession stand, kitchen, large meeting room, restrooms, office, lounge or lobby, and some specialized areas such as a ceramics workshop or weight room.

Frequently, larger centers have an indoor pool used year-round for recreational, instructional and therapeutic purposes. An important consideration in all recreational facilities is adequate storage space for equipment and supplies.

Most localities that have developed guidelines for indoor facilities have adopted a standard of 0.5 to 0.75 square feet per resident. Small centers may serve 5,000-8,000 neighborhood residents, while larger centers may well serve communities of 50,000-80,000 people.

Figure A-5. Recreation Center
Regional Park

Size
100-500 acres
No special size/1,000 population

Service area
Approximately 45 minutes driving time
25-mile service radius

Administrative Responsibility
Single or multi-jurisdiction

Purpose
Regional parks should supplement the community park system with more extensive open space areas and readily accessible passive recreational opportunities.

Character
Varied terrain, scenic views and extensive natural areas are important qualities of regional parks, along with the opportunity for participation in a variety of recreational activities.

Location
The regional park should be located in areas with significant natural characteristics and should serve several communities.

Potential facilities
- athletic fields
- swimming area, (beach and/or pool)
- boating facilities
- golf
- fishing lake

The regional park is designed to provide recreational space for a relatively large population. The road system enables smooth vehicular flow to the various facilities, and a single main access facilitates control and reduces conflicts between use areas. Located conveniently to the circulation system are large, intensive-use areas and picnic grounds. Lakes, streams or other outstanding natural features are desirable assets. As much as 80 percent of the site is undeveloped usable open space to provide opportunities for hiking, nature study and other passive activities. An isolated segment of the site may be reserved for day camps.

The regional park should complement the facilities provided at other parks and is not a substitute for neighborhood, community or district facilities. In addition to the more intensively developed areas, the regional park should also offer an abundance of open space for recreational pursuits such as picnicking, hiking, nature study and enjoying the outdoors.

Figure A-6. Regional Park
Greenway

Size
Any length, preferably longer than one mile
Typically 75-100 feet or wider

Service area
Depends upon the location, size and significance of the corridor

Administrative responsibility
Federal, state, local or public/private partnership

Purpose
Greenways are established to protect, preserve, and maintain existing natural and cultural corridors; to link population centers with recreational, educational and business areas, and other population centers; and to provide recreational and non-motorized transportation opportunities along these corridors by using natural features (ridgelines, steep slopes), utility rights-of-way, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, and watercourses (streams, rivers, canals).

Character
Depending on the location, it can range from rugged terrain with scenic views and extensive vegetation to open level meadows. The greenway can be a separate entity or a portion of any of the other park categories.

Potential facilities
- camping
- picnic facilities
- trails (all types)
- natural area
- winter sports
- fishing
- access points
- canoeing
- parking areas
- boating and facilities
- historic sites

Figure A-7. Greenway
Appendix C. Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation Planning

State Park

Size
600+ acres
Plan at 10-acres/1,000 population

Service area
Entire state

Administrative responsibility
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Purpose
To provide significant recreational experiences and protect a significant natural resource base or landscape

Character
Extensive open space and/or unique natural features in the form of views, terrain and vegetation are important qualities of the state facility. Compatible recreational uses are a necessity. Access to the ocean, the Chesapeake Bay, major lake, or river is very desirable.

Location
- The location is usually determined by the presence of unique natural features and proximity to population centers.
- The site should meet a variety of the popular outdoor recreational activities identified in the Virginia Outdoors Plan.
- The site must be consistent with the mission, goals and objectives of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).
- The site should preferably be located on a significant water resource offering opportunities for water-based recreation.
- A single access road allows excellent control and monitoring of users to the park and serves as the backbone of the vehicular circulation system. Specialized activities are grouped in intensive-use nodes along the central circulation system to provide areas for camping, picnicking, and water-oriented activities. The remaining area – as much as 80 percent of the total site – can be left as natural, undeveloped, but usable open space for such activities as hiking, horseback riding, nature study and fishing.

Potential facilities
- camping
- picnic facilities
- natural area
- swimming pool and/or swimming area and beach
- trails
- open play fields
- overnight facilities
- natural/historic interpretive facilities
- boating facilities
- fishing lake and/or stream access
- playground
- canoeing
- parking areas
- amphitheatre

Figure A-8. State Park
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity and Type of Facility</th>
<th>Dimensions**</th>
<th>Net acres* Required</th>
<th>Instant Capacity</th>
<th>Units/Pop.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Archery (Range)</strong></td>
<td>10' x 300' min. per target</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1/50,000</td>
<td>Ten positions — with movable targets. Could be part of a range complex including rifle, pistol, skeet and trap-buffer area required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baseball (Diamond)</strong></td>
<td>350' x 350' (400' to CF)</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1/6,000</td>
<td>Should be included in complex of fields at community district or regional parks — lighting desirable. Check League Guidelines for actual size.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>350' x 350' (400' to CF)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1/5,000</td>
<td>Full court — 1/2 court games would double instant capacity. Should be included in complex of fields at neighborhood, community district or regional parks — lighting desirable — also use as multipurpose court.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little League</td>
<td>200' x 200' (250' to CF)</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1/3,000</td>
<td>Consider at any facility where there is a water body that can support beaches. Swimming unit should contain 100' wide beach with 100' of available swimming water — 30% of people will be in water at one time under normal conditions — support facilities should be shared with other activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basketball (Court)</strong></td>
<td>60' x 100'</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1/10,000</td>
<td>Consider at any facility where there is a water body that can support beaches. Swimming unit should contain 100' wide beach with 100' of available swimming water — 30% of people will be in water at one time under normal conditions — support facilities should be shared with other activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beach (Swimming &amp; Bathing)</strong></td>
<td>Minimum 200' x 600'</td>
<td>3.0 acre</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>25 shore/1,000</td>
<td>Minimum of 100 acres of open water at least 4' in depth desirable — would accommodate eight boats at one time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boating, (Power) &amp; Water Skiing</strong></td>
<td>Variable to meet conditions</td>
<td>12 ac/boat</td>
<td>3.0/boat</td>
<td>0.5 ac/1,000</td>
<td>Consider this density primarily as a destination-type facility — support facilities would be needed to integrate tent camping with self-contained units — two types should be separate when practical — consider at large regional and state facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boat Ramp</strong></td>
<td>16' x length to meet 3' depth at low water</td>
<td>2 acres</td>
<td>8 boats/hr</td>
<td>see remarks</td>
<td>Consider this density primarily as a destination-type facility — support facilities would be needed to integrate tent camping with self-contained units — two types should be separate when practical — consider at large regional and state facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Camping</strong></td>
<td>35'x45'</td>
<td>0.125/acre</td>
<td>8 units/ac</td>
<td>10 ac/1,000</td>
<td>Consider this density primarily as a destination-type facility — support facilities would be needed to integrate tent camping with self-contained units — two types should be separate when practical — consider at large regional and state facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Contained Unit</td>
<td>90'x100'</td>
<td>0.20 ac/site</td>
<td>5 units/ac</td>
<td>5ac/1,000</td>
<td>Consider this density primarily as a destination-type facility — support facilities would be needed to integrate tent camping with self-contained units — two types should be separate when practical — consider at large regional and state facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canoeing</strong></td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>8 people/</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Small streams 10 to 40 feet wide, 4 canoes/mile mile — medium stream 40' to 70' wide will support 8 canoes/mile — large streams 75' wide or over will support 12 canoes/mile. Width x 5.280' ÷ 43,560 sq ft = surface acres/mile.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trails</strong></td>
<td><strong>Multi-use</strong></td>
<td>minimum 12' width</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Connector trails should be used to connect schools, parks, and other facilities. Proper signage and education is needed to minimize user conflicts. Provide off-road bicycle trails where practical to connect schools, businesses, parks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bicycle</strong></td>
<td>minimum 10' width</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equestrian</strong></td>
<td>Minimum 4' tread</td>
<td>8' cleared width</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hiking/jogging</strong></td>
<td>minimum 4' tread - rural</td>
<td>minimum 5' tread - urban</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remarks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Small streams 10 to 40 feet wide, 4 canoes/mile mile — medium stream 40' to 70' wide will support 8 canoes/mile — large streams 75' wide or over will support 12 canoes/mile. Width x 5.280' ÷ 43,560 sq ft = surface acres/mile.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table A-3. Capacity and Space Guidelines—continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity and Type of Facility</th>
<th>Dimensions**</th>
<th>Net acres* Required</th>
<th>Instant Capacity</th>
<th>Units/ Pop.</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firearms (Shooting Range)</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>5 ac</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1/50,000</td>
<td>Ten positions on each range. If possible, develop range complex with rifles, pistol ranges, and skeet and trap fields. — Careful coordination with National Rifle Association and local gun clubs desirable. Provide adequate buffer from other activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>8’ x 50’</td>
<td>400 sq. ft.</td>
<td>100 mile</td>
<td>1 mile shore/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoreline</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consider on any water body that can support fish population — DGIF suggests 10-acre minimum size where unlimited fishing pressure anticipated. Fishing water is a plus for any community, district, regional or state facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat</td>
<td>4 ac water/boat with 2 people</td>
<td>.50/acre</td>
<td>4 acre/1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stream</td>
<td>1 mile/four fisherman</td>
<td>4/mile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football (Field)</td>
<td>195’ x 480’ 150’ x 360’ actual play area</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1/10,000</td>
<td>Should be included in complex of fields at community, district or regional park. Lighting desirable — could also serve as field hockey, lacrosse, or soccer field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>6,500 yards/18 holes average, 7,000 yds. + championship course</td>
<td>50 acre/9 holes</td>
<td>4/hole x # holes</td>
<td>9 holes/25,000</td>
<td>Eighteen holes for each 50,000 people minimum size 100 acres — 160 acres desirable — can accommodate 500 persons/day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field</td>
<td>200’ x 350’</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1/25,000</td>
<td>Should be included in complex of fields at community park. Lighting desirable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Rink</td>
<td>85’ x 200’</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1/30,000</td>
<td>Are considered multipurpose fields. Artificial icemaking required — can adapt paved court areas to hold water in colder parts of state for limited winter use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseshoes (Lanes)</td>
<td>12’ x 50’</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1/10,000</td>
<td>Include in neighborhood, community, district, or regional park with high percentage of people over 30 — multiple lane best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upland</td>
<td>12 acre/hunter/day</td>
<td>.083 hunters/ac</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Using a turnover factor of two = 6 acres of resources/hunter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterfowl</td>
<td>12 ac/hunter</td>
<td>.083 hunters/ac</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacrosse (Field)</td>
<td>260’ x 500’</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1/25,000</td>
<td>Football or soccer fields often used — provided at community park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity and Type of Facility</td>
<td>Dimensions**</td>
<td>Net acres* Required</td>
<td>Instant Capacity</td>
<td>Units/ Pop.</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>ORV</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Wheel</td>
<td>min. 5’ tread width</td>
<td>10 acre min.</td>
<td>4/mile</td>
<td>1 acre/5,000</td>
<td>Carefully planned trails are required to buffer from passive activities. Should be environmentally sensitive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Wheel</td>
<td>min. 7’ tread width</td>
<td>15 acre min.</td>
<td>4/mile</td>
<td>2 acre/5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnicking</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td></td>
<td>4/table</td>
<td>10 units/1,000</td>
<td>Tie with other activities — Density higher in urbanized areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>6 acre/boat</td>
<td>.5 person/acre</td>
<td>1 acre/1,000</td>
<td>Large expanses of open water desirable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboard Park</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>0.25 min.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1/25,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiing (Snow)</td>
<td>100’ x length</td>
<td></td>
<td>75/lift</td>
<td>1 ac. ski slope/</td>
<td>Requires northeast facing slopes. On site of 1,000 100 acres or more, slopes should be protected by trees. Also requires annual snowfall of 30” or more, or artificial snow-making equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer (Field)</td>
<td>250’ x 400’</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1/5,000</td>
<td>Provide at community, district, or regional park — football or lacrosse fields often used. Spring and fall seasons may require additional fields if football or baseball fields also used for soccer program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball (Field)</td>
<td>300’ x 300’</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1/3,000</td>
<td>Provide in complex area neighborhood, community, district, or regional park. Lighting desirable — more than one field per site desirable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming (Pool)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jr. Olympic</td>
<td>45’ x 75’</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1/10,000</td>
<td>15 sq. ft. of water per person, based on 3% of of population, 100 sq. ft. deck per 35 sq. ft. of water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympic</td>
<td>75’ x 150’</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>1/20,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis (Court)</td>
<td>60’ x 120’</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1/2,000</td>
<td>Provided at neighborhood, community, district, or regional sites — develop in pairs where possible — lighting desirable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>50’ x 80’</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1/1,000</td>
<td>Provide at neighborhood, community, district, or regional facilities. Consider using basketball courts for multipurpose use.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Public Meeting Notes and Recreation Facilities Wish Lists
RECREATION MASTER PLAN PUBLIC WORKSHOP

PROJECT: Effingham County Recreation Master Plan
CHA Project # 28858

DATE: September 9, 2014

TIME: 6:00pm

LOCATION: Administration Complex, Springfield, GA

ATTENDEES:

Wendall Kessler – Chairman, Board of Commissioners
Phil Kieffer – Vice Chairman, Board of Commissioners
Forrest Floyd – Board of Commissioners
Vera Jones – Board of Commissioners
Reginald Loper – Board of Commissioners
Toss Allen – Interim County Administrator
Adam Kobek – Community Relations Director
Clarence Morgan – County Recreation Director
Charles Dixon – Recreation Board
Roy Branson – Recreation Board
Robert Hunter – Recreation Board
Douglas Kirkland – Recreation Board
Patrick Graham – CHA
King Evans – CHA
Arwen Otwell – CHA
Roy Griffin – Citizen
Leroy Lloyd – Citizen
Rachel Lloyd – Citizen
G.G. Rigsby – Citizen
Franklin Goldwire – Citizen
Nina Dasher – Citizen
M. Donaldson – Citizen
Jamie Deloach – Citizen
Patrick Donahue – Citizen

NOTES: The following items were discussed:

1. Commission Chairman Kessler introduced the group and CHA.
2. Patrick Graham gave a 15-minute slide presentation about the master plan process and initial findings.
3. Discussion was opened up to allow the Recreation Board, the Board of Commissioners, and concerned citizens to discuss the status of the current SPLOST funding and a way to move forward with long-term planning and potential additional SPLOST programs.
   a. Chairman Kessler explained the Commissioners’ original reservations about spending $1.7M of SPLOST funds on the Springfield Recreation Complex. They were concerned that renovations and a potential expansion might not solve the County’s recreational inadequacies problem.
   b. The Recreation Board expressed frustration with the Commissioners because there was little communication between the two groups.
   c. Chairman Kessler expressed his opinion that Pooler will continue to grow and push additional development into Effingham County. He would like Effingham to be out front of that development and planning and building for new residents.
   d. It was agreed that no matter what happens with the long-term planning, the Springfield Recreation Complex needs to be renovated.
   e. The Recreation Board and the Recreation Department underlined their distrust of the Commissioners with saying they paid for the Sand Hill Complex by setting aside portions of the their own funds. They didn’t feel they were being adequately heard by the Commissioners and couldn’t count on SPLOST funding being released.
   f. The inadequacy of parking at all parks was mentioned – “there hasn’t been money spent on parking since ‘75”.
   g. Chairman Kessler emphasized that now is the right time for a SPLOST. He said the top three wants/concerns of the public are public safety, roads, and recreation.
   h. The Recreation Board stressed the need for not only capital funding to renovate/expand the parks, but to take into account future operational and maintenance needs. The current maintenance requirements are not being met due to a lack of funding.
   i. A rough plan to move forward was agreed upon – the Commissioners would look into spending a portion of the current SPLOST funds on acquiring property for a new, centralized park. The Recreation Board would determine one park they could put the rest of the SPLOST funds into as an example to show the public what can be done with additional SPLOST funding – which will be voted on within the next two years.
   j. Recreation Director Morgan explained his desire for the new park to include five baseball/softball fields, one football, and one soccer field to start. He hopes to double that footprint in the near future.
   k. Morgan also expressed a need for at least one fully ADA-compliant playground at an existing park (potentially at the Baker Trail and/or Sand Hill) and one for the future park.
   l. Potential properties were discussed for the future park:
      i. Expanding Springfield onto an adjacent property, but the landowner has been uncooperative.
      ii. Purchasing two to three lots next to the Baker Lake and Trail.
      iii. There is an IDA (?) property off of Hodgeville Road that could potentially be donated to the County.
      iv. The preferred property discussed was a 76-acre mostly cleared property on Route 21.
m. The future park can’t be too close to Rincon because the county doesn’t want to
double up on services that are already offered by the city at their new Macomber Park.
n. Effingham has one of the largest recreation programs in the state, and hosts several
tournaments throughout the year.
o. Financing was considered for various projects, including SPLOST, specialized vendor
financing, and potential private lenders. The Board of Commissioners is prepared to
consider all options when it comes to recreation projects.
Prioritized List of Needs/Must Haves

1. Sandhill Complex – fix open sewer problem by replacing/expanding septic drainfield
2. Central Learning Center Gym – repair and refinish existing wood basketball court
3. Sandhill Complex – add netting to backstops for 5 baseball/softball fields (original estimated cost $15k)
4. Sandhill Complex – 3 new batting cages, lighted and covered
5. Sandhill Complex – new building (approx. 30ft x 50ft) for maintenance equipment (original estimated cost $40k)
6. Sandhill Complex – replace dirt infields and existing infield irrigation piping/sprayheads for 5 baseball/softball fields, including cost of specialized equipment for infield maintenance
7. SR119 Complex – renovate existing restrooms and pavilion (new fixtures, redo finishes)
8. Sandhill Complex – add new concrete walks (30-ft wide) and drainage infrastructure around concession/scoring tower building
9. Sandhill Complex – new landscaping and signage
10. Sandhill Complex – enlarge women’s restroom facilities (add 3-4 new stalls)
Phrase one

1. Gymnasium - refurbish existing gym and new gym

2. 6 Athletic fields (baseball and softball) - lighted
   a. 1 - 335' with 90' bases capability
   b. 2 - 315' with 90' bases capability
   c. 3 - 225' with 70' bases capability

3. Bleachers covers for all 6 fields above

4. 3 Pavilions - 1 inside athletic field area, 1 by the playgrounds and 1 by the football/soccer area

5. Press Box – Concession Area – Restrooms (amount listed below)

6. Restrooms – upgrade with tile and AC
   a. Men’s – 2 urinals and 3 stalls plus 2 sinks
   b. Women’s – 10 stalls plus 2 sinks

7. Restrooms – to keep open all the times – AC but not tiled
   a. 1 small with 1 sink and 1 toilet
   b. 1 small with 1 sink and 1 toilet

8. 1 regulation football field – lighted – all side by side

9. 1 regulation soccer field - lighted

10. 1 multi-purpose field – lighted

11. Concession area with restrooms at football/soccer area

12. Maintenance Building

13. 4 lighted batting cages with 8 pitching machines

14. Handicapped assessable playground - fenced

15. Large regular playground - fenced

16. Walking Trail

17. Dog Park

18. Large pavilion with 4 meeting rooms and 1 large room with restrooms and large kitchen

19. Splash pad

20. Skate Park

Phrase Two

21. 5 Athletic fields (baseball and softball) - lighted
   a. 1 - 335' with 90' bases capability
   b. 1 - 315' with 90' bases capability
   c. 2 - 315' with 80' bases capability
   d. 1 - 225' with 70' bases capability

22. 1 regulation football field - lighted

23. 1 regulation soccer field - lighted

24. Bleacher covers for all 5 fields

25. Press Box – Concession Area and Restrooms (amount listed below)

26. Restrooms – upgrade with tile and AC
   a. Men’s – 2 urinals and 3 stalls plus 2 sinks
   b. Women’s – 5 stalls plus 2 sinks

27. Pavilion -1 inside of athletic area