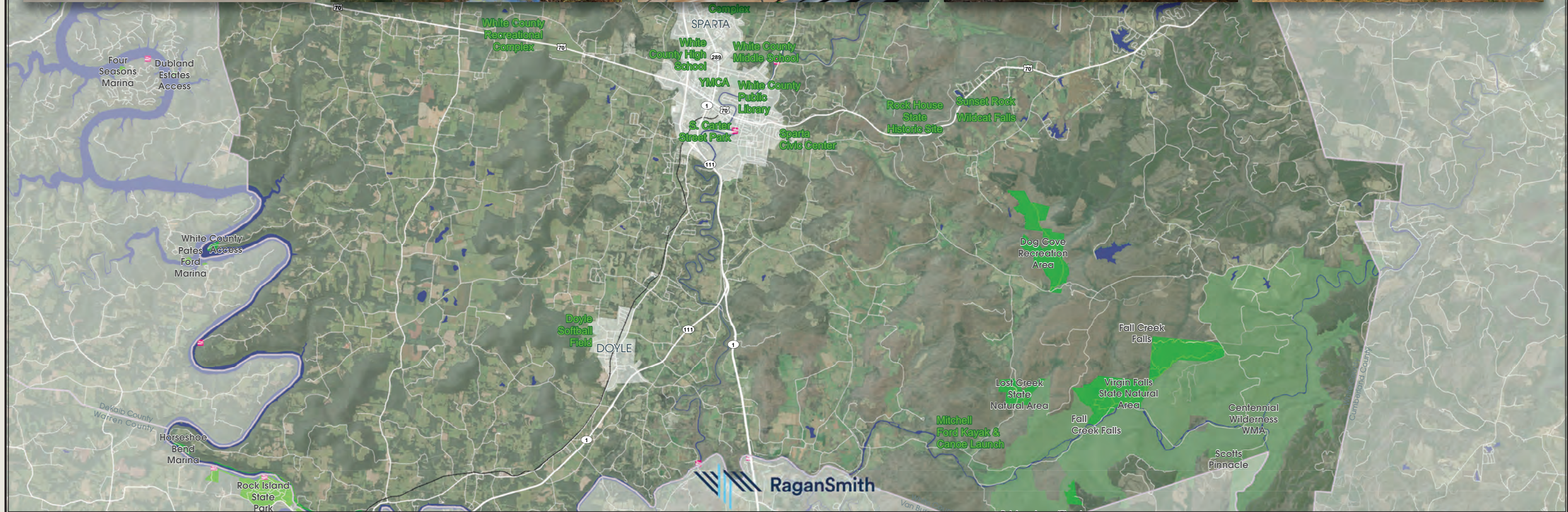
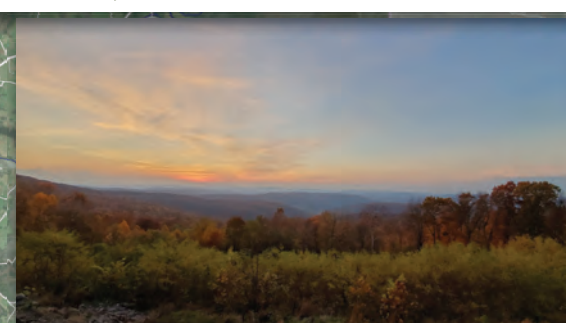
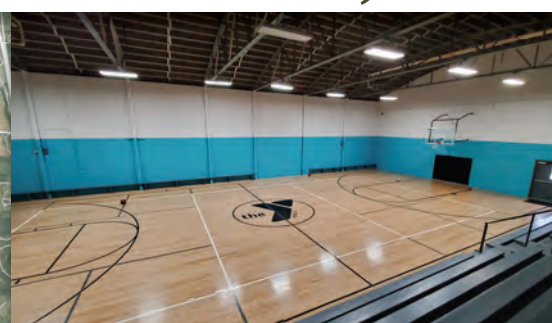




PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

FINAL REVISION JULY 22, 2022



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



In developing the White County Parks & Recreation Master Plan, the Ragan-Smith team worked closely with White County Officials and members of the White County Parks & Recreation Advisory Team. This plan could not have been possible without the time and efforts put forth by the advisory committee and many stakeholders who contributed to shaping the vision of this plan. This plan was realized through grant support from the Tennessee Department of Health.

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- | | |
|---|--|
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Tennessee Department of Health:

This master plan study was made possible through the Tennessee Department of Health, Healthy Built Environment Grant.



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Introduction & Guiding Principles

Introduction:

The existing park facilities in White County are of high quality and the county's recreational programs serve a wide range of residents and visitors alike. In keeping with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) three pillars of **Conservation, Health and Wellness and Social Equity**, White County has developed a master plan that will work with surrounding management agencies to continue to protect green space and environmental assets, and to provide opportunities for healthy and fun activities for all its residents. This master plan provides a vision and road map to maintain and enhance existing facilities and programs while anticipating the future needs of the county. Well-functioning parks, open space and greenways will be instrumental in maintaining the County's health and economic vitality.

Project Vision Statement:

To provide a full range of recreational opportunities that connect people to a mixture of passive and active recreational opportunities in White County, take advantage of the surrounding options for outdoor recreational adventures, and to make lifelong play and learning opportunities available for all its residents through strong programs and well maintained facilities.

Conservation: White County parks encompass over 190 acres and the county is connected to vast areas of State managed public land that includes almost 30,000 acres.

Health & Wellness: According to the National Census and Health records, the State of Tennessee and White County residents are at relatively high risk for diabetes, heart disease and obesity. The parks and recreation master plan has suggested an important guiding principle that includes active outdoor recreation and the need for more connections, such as greenways, blueways and multi-modal routes to promote walking, hiking, biking, and connections between parks and neighborhoods that surround them.

Social Equity: The White County Parks & Recreation plan includes a guiding principle to provide recreation programs for residents and visitors of all ages and all social, economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds and to make facilities and programs inclusive in nature.



Importance of Parks & Recreation

Parks, recreation and cultural resources touch every aspect of our quality of life. Planning for future capital improvements and operating and maintenance budgets is very important in shaping the vision for White County.

Parks and Recreation Equates to Quality of Life:

Responding to the public online survey; **78% of White County residents said that Parks and Recreation are important to very important.** This puts emphasis on how much park and recreational programs connect with maintaining a high quality of life for White County residents.

Valued Amenity to Attract Young Professionals:

According to the Urban Land Institute, **68% of U.S. millennials (ages 18-34) cite proximity to parks as an important community characteristic.** This is a vital consideration for White County as it relates to encouraging young professionals to make White County their long-term place of residence. It also speaks to the important role that **parks and recreation play in drawing and maintaining a young and skilled work force in White County.**

Valued Amenity for Retirement:

According to a study by the American Planning Association on “How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development”; a survey reviewed the importance of **14 features used to evaluate a retiree’s decision to move to a community. The first two in rank order were scenic beauty and recreational opportunities.**

NRPA Park Value Calculator:

A general calculator used by the National Recreation and Parks Association puts the following values to parks and environmental resources:

Air Quality Benefits: \$0.54 per tree per year, equating to \$143.88 per acre of trees per year

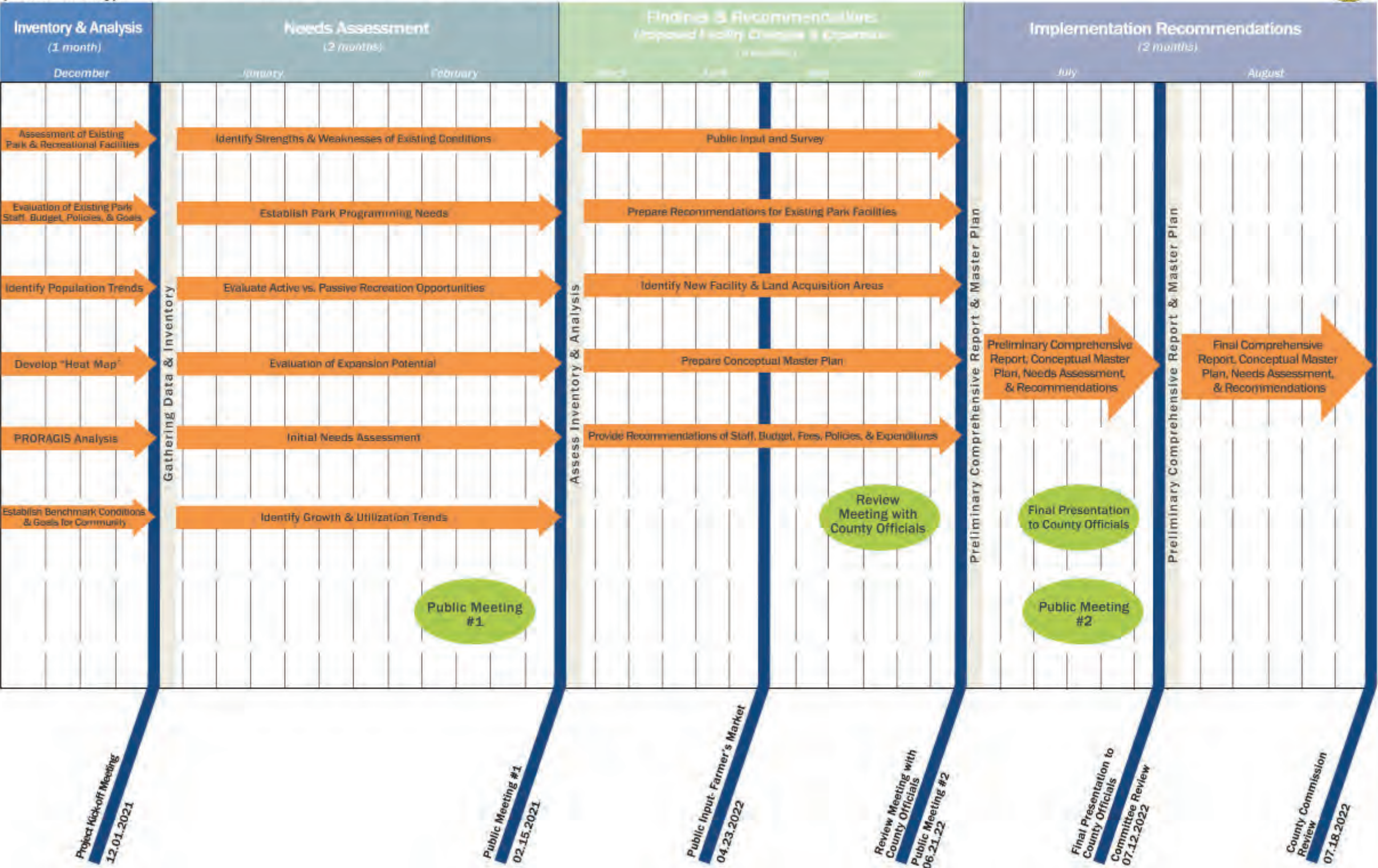
Water Quality Benefits: \$156.12 per tree per year, equating to \$790.63 per acre of trees per year

Health Benefits: Moderately active park users under 65 save \$427 annually in health care costs; Moderately active park users over 65 save \$854 annually in health care costs. **Children that have easy access to a playground are 5 times more likely to have a healthy weight than children that do not have access to playgrounds.**

Property Value: Property values increase as much as 20 percent when adjacent to a park or greenway. A study in Active Living Research estimated that the average household living half a mile from an open space would be willing to pay \$4,104 more for a home to live a ¼ mile closer to the open space.



Parks & Recreation Master Plan - Project Schedule
(White County)





Planning Approach

The process used to establish White County's Park and Recreational Master Plan was both qualitative and quantitative. Information was gathered from on-site reconnaissance, GIS mapping and demographics, and direct input from stakeholders in both large public input meetings and a digital on-line survey. This information was analyzed and communicated back to County staff for the project, and to shape a preliminary master plan. Further review and public input of this preliminary plan created the recommendations for a final master plan and the direct implementation and policy tools to bring it to fruition. The stages of the planning process can be summarized as follows:

Phase 1: Inventory & Existing Conditions Analysis

Phase 2: Demand & Needs Assessment

Phase 3: Master Plan Recommendations

Phase 4: Implementation & Policy Recommendations

Large Natural Areas

The significance of large natural areas and the importance of the scenic State Parks & Natural Areas are of particular importance for White County and are strong considerations to include in the planning process.

Adding Programs and Facilities to Existing Park Property

"Stack" more recreational activities within existing park property. The White County Park Complex on route to and the White County Middle School property are locations that could provide space for more facilities and programs.

Partnerships

Partnership opportunities are an important component of the master plan with the understanding that they will play a meaningful role in meeting the increased demands placed on parks and green space as development and growth occur. Parks facilities and partnerships were evaluated with a creative approach that expands beyond the traditional defined regional, community or neighborhood park system. The YMCA, the County School System and the City of Sparta are three partners of significance for the county.

Long Term Funding

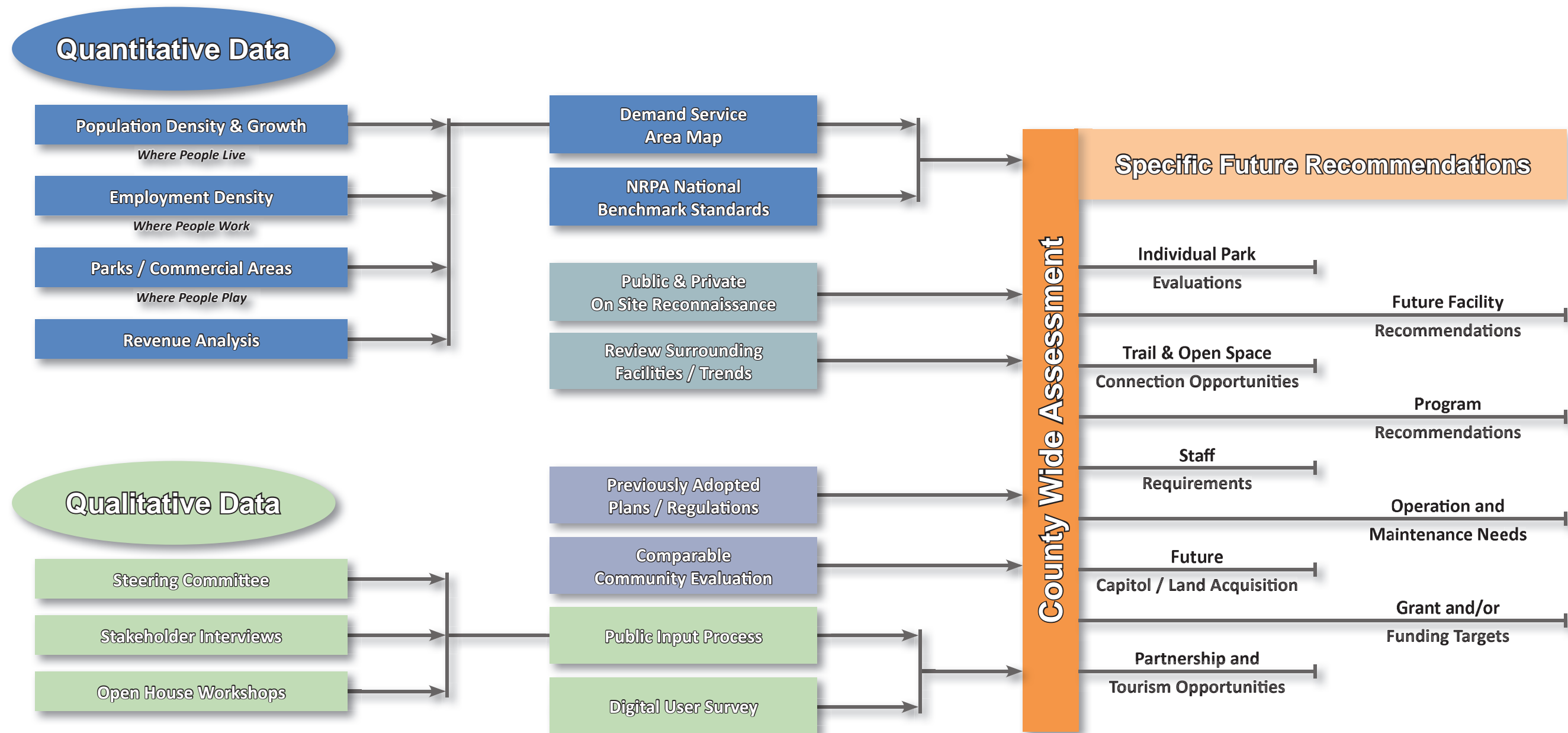
The master plan focused on specific needs to fund parks and recreation beyond the general fund. In addition to new facilities and programs, there is the need to consider the rising cost of operations and maintenance for existing facilities.



Planning Approach Chart

Parks, Recreation, and Trails Assessment Tools:

This flow chart is a graphic depiction of the project approach for the White County Parks and Recreation Master Plan Process.



Lester Flatt:

Lester Flatt was a Sparta resident who gained international fame as a rising Bluegrass singer-songwriter. Known best for writing songs that eventually became the theme tracks for the show "The Beverly Hillbillies" and the movie, "Bonnie + Clyde". Lester and his achievements are honored annually at the "Liberty Square Celebration" with a special Lester Flatt Memorial Bluegrass Day, which is held on Bluegrass Day, the fourth Saturday of May.



Jackson Kayaks:

Founded in 2003 in Sparta, Tennessee, a kayaking manufacturer in the niche area of kayak fishing. The company has not only expanded to hire the industry's leaders but also, has hired the top athletes in this sport to push innovation to the maximum. This company is still mostly locally run and family owned.



Caney Fork River

In the early days on the Caney Fork River, settlers would cut down trees to make rafts to bring their goods to sell to Nashville. This trip was extremely difficult at the time, meaning many people didn't survive the trip. The dam built in December 1949 put an end to this trip. This river was also the leader in the fresh water pearl market in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. According to a local newspaper article of the time, two boys going fishing in the river discovered a large freshwater pearl as they were opening mussels for bait. The most valuable pearl found here sold for \$2,000 at the time, costing roughly \$41,000 today.



Sparta Rock House:

The Rock House was built in the late 1830s and served as a rest stop and tollhouse because of the county's position on the wagon route between Nashville and Knoxville. As time went on, it became a stop for presidents; Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk. In the late 1800s, the Rock House was converted into a school and stayed open until the 1920s. By the 1940s, the state purchased the Rock House and started restoring it. This mainly happened because of the Daughters of the Revolution. As of now, the Rock House is operated as a State Historic site.



Rock Island State Park:

Rock Island State Park was established in 1969 even though the historical significance of this area dates back to a small village called Rock Island. This was the first permanent settlement in the county and the arrival of the railroad in 1881 caused the residents to move closer to the railway. Later, someone decided to use the Great Falls of the Caney Fork and Collins River as an industrial cotton mill, creating a small business town. Unfortunately, in 1902 there was a flood that severely damaged the company's facility, causing the owners to close and sell the factory. Later, the factory transitioned into the Great Falls Hydroelectric Plant in 1917. By the early 1920s, they built the dam and converted the river into a lake. Creating new recreational opportunities and new revenue sources. The Webb Hotel was built in 1920 with "Witch's Castle" and in 1939, the Tennessee Valley Authority acquired the dam and powerhouse and it was listed on the National Registry.





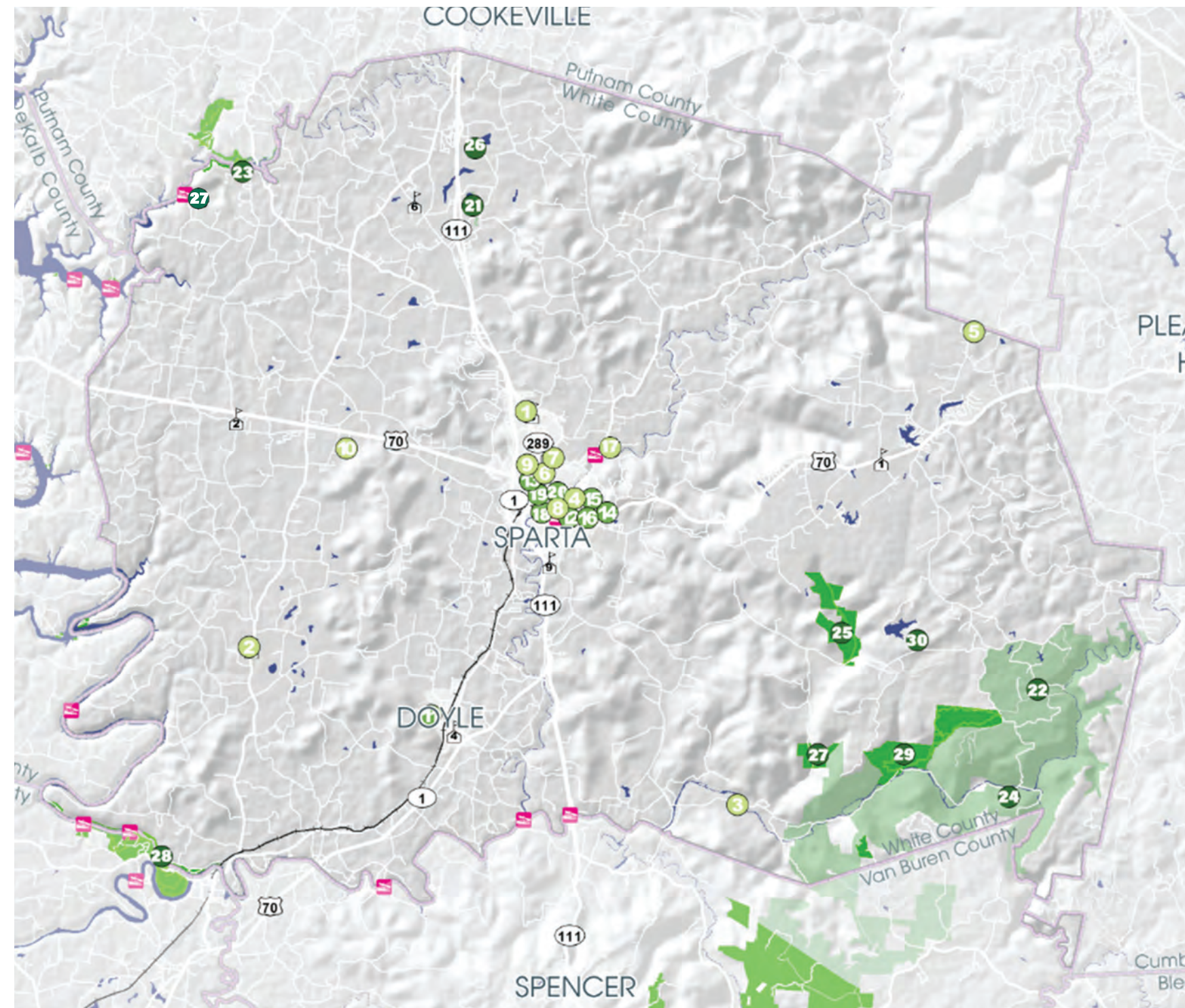
Project Overview & Study Limits

Project Overview:

White County is an area rich in natural resources and environmental beauty. Within its boundaries there are several large natural recreation areas that encompass more than 30,000 acres, making it a great place for outdoor enthusiasts. It is also host to the communities of Sparta and Doyle.

White County has approximately 190 acres of parks and the City of Sparta has approximately 34 acres of parks that require programming, operations and management. The county's parks have a diversity in size, ranging from less than 1 acre to over 137 acres. Inventory of park facilities and programs from local schools, State Natural Areas and State Parks were considered as part of the context for the study.

Study Limits:



Legend

White County Facilities

- 1 Babe Ruth Fields at County Fairgrounds
- 2 Doyle Softball Field
- 3 Mitchell Ford Kayak & Canoe Launch
- 4 Old WCMS Property
- 5 Ravenscroft Peerless Mine Walking Trail
- 6 Sunset Rock
- 7 White County Heritage Museum
- 8 White County Recreational Complex

City of Sparta Facilities / Partnerships

- 9 Liberty Square Amphitheatre
- 10 Little League Fields at YMCA
- 11 Metcalf Park / Farmer's Market
- 12 Mountain Bike Trail
- 13 S. Carter Street Park
- 14 Sparta Civic Center & Pearson Park
- 15 Sparta-White County YMCA
- 16 Wallace Smith Park

State Parks, Natural Areas & WMA's

- 17 Anderson Pond
- 18 Bridgestone / Firestone Centennial Wilderness WMA
- 19 Bridgestone Nature Reserve Chesnut Mountain
- 20 Burgess Falls
- 21 Dog Cove Recreation Area
- 22 Hampton Crossroads
- 23 Lost Creek State Natural Area
- 24 Rock House State Memorial Park
- 25 Rock Island State Park
- 26 Virgin Falls State Natural Area
- 27 Cane Hollow Recreational Area

Schools

- Bon De Croft Elementary
- Cassville Elementary
- Central View Elementary
- Doyle Elementary
- Findlay Elementary
- Northfield Elementary School
- White County Middle School
- White County Highschool
- Woodland Park Elementary



Park Classification

White County has numerous existing parks. These facilities range in size from Regional and Special Use Parks to Local Neighborhood Parks. Although not under the jurisdiction of White County, it is important to also recognize the State Natural Areas, Wildlife Management Areas and State Parks as well. To balance the different recreational needs of its residents, White County will need to continue to provide a variety of park and trail facilities that range in size and function. As the area grows, it will be important to recognize not only the need for utilizing existing parks but also the need for an increased diversity of recreational programs and partnerships to expand new parks. The following is a description of how parks are typically classified by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), tailored to the county's current park facilities and programs.

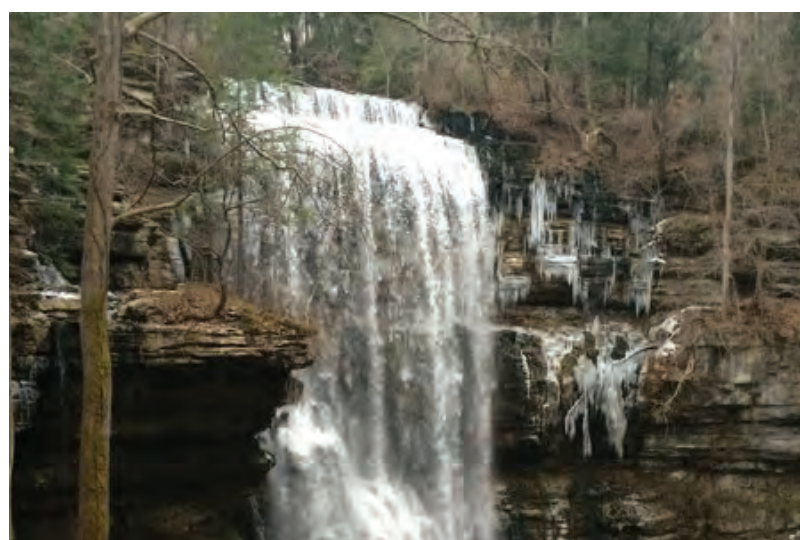
Regional / District Parks or Special Use Facilities:

Regional Parks or Special Use Facilities serve the needs of multiple communities and are typically 50 to 200 acres in size. Examples of Regional Parks include, but are not limited to: state parks, county parks, and protected natural areas. Examples of Special Use Facilities include golf courses, botanical gardens, museums, outdoor entertainment venues and unique sporting event facilities. Regional Parks and Special Use Facilities should also provide additional support services such as restrooms, concessions, and adequate parking. Typical activities for Regional Parks and/or Special Use Facilities include picnicking, boating, observing wildlife and walking greenway trails, and in some cases camping.

Park Size: Ranges from 50 to 200 acres plus. (Serving all the White County area plus Regional Events)

Service Area: 50 miles plus (Typically within a 2 to 3 hour drive maximum)

Service areas for Community: District Parks with specialized facilities may extend much further.



Virgin Falls (*State Owned Park*) is an example of both a special use and a regional park because of its draw from around the region.

Community Park:

Community Parks serve multiple neighborhoods in the surrounding community with both active and passive recreational activities and will typically include park programs that provide extended hours of both day and night-time operation. Large areas of a community park may be programed for athletic facilities designed for league play. Large areas of a community park may also be designated for conservation, passive recreational use and nature trails if natural resource assessments warrant it. They will connect to surrounding neighborhoods within walking distance and will also draw users who will drive to gain access to the park. Greenway connections, bike routes and street and sidewalk networks should provide access to Community Parks. Fitness centers, community centers and athletic sports facilities may be integrated into community level parks if adequate park area, good access and parking accommodations are available. Restroom facilities, concessions and off-street parking areas are important park elements to accommodate a large number of visitors who will spend significant time in the park. Some Community Parks will have specialized facilities that will serve the larger district and or regional area.

Park Size: Typically, 20 - 75+ acres serving an entire community (15,000+ residents)

Service Area: Typically, 1.0 to 2.0 miles in urban and suburban areas and 2.0 to 3.0 miles in rural areas.

Service areas for Community: District Parks with specialized facilities may extend much further.



White County Recreational Complex is an example of a community park because of its size and mixture of active and passive recreation. It also has the potential to be developed into a regional park because of it's size.

Neighborhood Park:

Neighborhood parks concentrate several recreational activities into a smaller area. They are designed to serve the active and passive recreational needs of the surrounding neighborhood. They typically have sports fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, open space and walking trails for unorganized play or local sports organizations. Neighborhood parks should promote partnerships with surrounding neighborhoods and homeowners' associations to help facilitate park activities and maintenance when possible. They will primarily connect to surrounding neighborhoods within walking distance and an easy bicycle or driving distance. Bike routes, sidewalks and local street networks should provide access to Neighborhood Parks. If greenway routes extend through a neighborhood, they should also connect to Neighborhood Parks. Community centers, picnic shelters, restroom facilities and off-street parking areas are park elements that may fit in the Neighborhood Park plan.

Park Size: Typically 1 - 25+ acres serving 1,000 to 20,000 residents.

Service Area: Typically ¼ to ½ mile in suburban and urban areas and 1.0 to 2.0 miles in rural areas.

S. Carter Street Park (A City of Sparta Park) serves as an example of a neighborhood and community park based on its smaller size and facilities focused on unorganized play and social gathering space.



Image courtesy of Chuck Sutherland

Mini-Park:

Mini-Parks are characterized by their small size and their connections to their immediate surroundings. Because Mini-Parks are so closely connected to their surrounding context, they will be designed to accommodate specific local needs. Size limitations will typically generate a mixture of passive, visual and small scaled active recreational use. Mini-Parks should promote partnerships with surrounding neighborhoods and businesses to help facilitate park activities and maintenance when possible. Mini-Parks will primarily connect to surrounding neighborhoods or land use through pedestrian and bicycle access. They can be incorporated into a high intensity land use, serving as a focal point for the community. In this case, access may be planned as part of adjoining parking and regional transportation accommodations. Spaces for social interaction, rest and relaxation are typically planned into Mini-Park space. Small scaled playgrounds or interactive games can provide opportunities for activity. Strong visual elements and public art elements can fit well into this scale of space.

Park Size: Typically 1/3 acre - 1 acre, serving 300 to 1,000 residents, surrounding homes or businesses. If a Mini-Park is designed to function in a high intensity area, it may serve a much higher number of people with the intent of moving people quickly through the park.

Service Area: Typically ¼ mile to 3 or 4 city blocks.

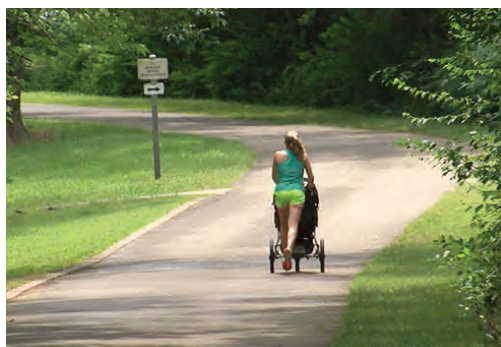
Liberty Square Amphitheater (A City of Sparta Park) serves as an example of a small neighborhood or "mini-park" because of its size and its urban context.



Image courtesy of Chuck Sutherland

Greenways:

Greenways function as linear parks. They can be very narrow or several hundred feet wide. Greenways provide transportation links, waterway access, environmental enhancement, ecosystem protection and recreational opportunities. By connecting park areas and points of interest, greenways greatly increase the value of parks, historical and cultural assets. Frequently, trailhead areas can be designed with facilities that provide recreational opportunities, like a neighborhood park.



Park Size: Varies. Minimum width should be no less than 50 feet

Service Area: In addition to linking other facilities, greenways function as neighborhood and community level parks for residents within ½ to 2 miles away.

Blueways:

Blueways are water-based networks designed for paddlers. They function much like greenways in that they provide a different mode of recreational travel. They can also provide a unique view and experience of the environmental and cultural assets of White County for residents and visitors using them. White County has multiple blueway opportunities on the Collins, Cawey Park and Calkiller Rivers.



Park Size: Varies based on size of waterway

Service Area: In addition to linking other facilities blueway boat launches and waterway access points can function as neighborhood and community level parks to residents

Park Connectors:

There are several methods of incorporating pedestrian, bicycle and paddle connections into the transportation and recreation system. The following trails and connector options can be integrated into parks, greenways, blueways and public right of way for streets and roads.



Multi-use / shared-use paths: Typically 10' to 12' wide with a concrete, asphalt or boardwalk hard surface. The pathway should be physically separated from roadways with a landscape buffer. These pathways are the most comfortable for the largest percentage of users and they fit well into greenways and streets or roads with a wide right of way. They are designed for pedestrians, bicycles, skaters and scooters and usually meet ADA design standards. Well designed and strategically placed multi-use pathways become economic assets to surrounding commercial and residential land use by increasing commerce and land value.

Designated Bicycle Lanes: Bike lanes are typically a minimum of 4' to 5' wide and can be separate and protected from streets or they can be integrated into roadway surfaces. They are designed specifically for bicycle travel with the intent of minimizing automobile and pedestrian interaction or conflicts. Pavement markings, specialized surfaces and signage are utilized to establish clear bike routes.



Pedestrian Sidewalks: Sidewalks should be designed to have a minimum width of 5'. Areas with high pedestrian traffic require greater width. Sidewalks provide people with space to travel within the public right-of-way that is separate from vehicles. Bicycles are allowed on sidewalks, but not encouraged. They must yield to pedestrians.

Natural Surface Trails: Typically 3' to 6' wide, natural surface trails are designed for areas that see lighter pedestrian traffic or recreational hiking. These trails can be made of several different types of materials that are compacted into a more solid surface. Due to surface materials and slope, most trails cannot be easily traveled by anything other than pedestrians or bikes specifically designed for rough terrain. Some natural surface trails can be designed to meet ADA design standards due to slope and surface conditions.



Access to blueways: Watercraft launch points should consider the following design features; Easy access to parking and pull off areas from the nearby road network, a hard level landing and loading zone at the water's edge with an area of 60'x 60', a dock ramp or rail system for stabilization of the watercraft while people transfer in and out of the water and erosion control and bank protection for exposed stream or lakeside slopes next to the launch. There should be multiple access points to the water on a blueway at intervals ranging from three to six miles apart. Maps designating the blueway routes and estimated travel times for paddling between access points should be displayed.



Park Users & Experiences

The existing park and recreation facilities in White County have been inventoried to capture a true understanding of the park size, type, and acreage. Facilities have also been evaluated to understand the unique qualities they hold and the types of users that are being served by them. The following categories identify park space based on user experiences and opportunities. This is an important evaluation to make relative to serving all ages of the community and providing a full range of recreational options. There can be multiple types of experiences for people using a park space that go beyond the classic definitions of “active” and “passive”.

Active Use Park Space:



This includes park space that offer facilities for organized athletics, active play areas and large scale programmed events. Active use parks typically have community buildings or shelters, bathrooms and parking areas to handle large amounts of automobile traffic. Athletic facilities can include soccer, baseball, softball, football, tennis, volleyball, swimming pools, disc golf, skateboarding, lacrosse and many other active playing fields. Active use parks can also be programmed for large community events that do not involve athletics.

Passive Use & Conservation Park Space:

Passive parks include large areas of open space for unprogrammed play, enhanced natural areas and protected environmental features and wildlife observation. Environmental and cultural education programs are often a part of passive use of park space. Passive parks are typically designed to minimize the impact of buildings, roads and large-scale facilities on the natural environment.



Cultural & Educational Park Space:



Cultural parks have landscapes, locations or buildings that represent important historical events, activities, people, or cultural themes. A park's cultural theme can be relative to the heritage, sacred beliefs, customs, art or music of a particular group of people. A park's historic significance can be represented by a designed space or building, a pattern of development, a monument or *a something that represents a particular period of time or event.*

Outdoor Experience - Health Park Space:

Outdoor experience parks focus on opportunities to engage in physical activity in the outdoor environment. The space is frequently unprogrammed and connects to the natural environment. This can include walking, hiking, biking, camping, watercraft, climbing, horseback riding and fitness training facilities. These uses can fit within park space defined as passive or active. Nature centers and facilities for outdoor equipment training and distribution can be part of the programmed space for larger scale facilities. Health parks provide equipment and facilities that connect to outdoor experiences.



Play Centered Park Space:



There is a positive trend in park design to “break the bubble” of static design approaches to play and playgrounds. Play centered space is designed to integrate fun, health, learning and social interaction. In addition to controlled, age-appropriate playgrounds, it is important to connect play space to the larger context of a park's surroundings. The idea is to encourage inclusiveness, interaction and exploration in a space designed for play. Play elements are connected to encourage movement, imagination and choice. In a play centered park space: access, movement, art, view sheds, environmental features, learning and health can all be integrated into the play experience.

Interactive Pet Park Space:

Parks that allow for interaction with pets have become an important community space. Dog parks or “bark parks” have become very popular. They are specifically designed to provide places where dogs can run free, off-leash and socialize with other dogs. It also provides an opportunity for pet owners to socialize with each other. It is important to design dog parks with safety and comfort in mind, including specific park rules on dog and dog owner etiquette.



Social Entertainment Park Space:

Parks are great places to socialize and entertain. Some park spaces should allow for spontaneous, non-programmed activities and social interaction. Mini-parks and greenways can often function as prime opportunities for social interaction. Large green spaces that are designed to accommodate community events can be designed in a flexible manner to accommodate music, art, cultural events, group exercise, specialized clubs or hobbies. Social and entertaining spaces in a park are prime candidates for partnerships with entities beyond the park and recreation department and staff.

Utility Field - Flex Open Space:

Athletic clubs and major athletic tournaments create a high demand for active sports facilities. This can sometimes create limitations for local programs and spontaneous “pick-up” sports activities. Utility field space and general all-purpose open space provide opportunities for spontaneous play and practice space for a wide variety of local athletic programs. Flex open space does not require heavy investment in formal infrastructure or buildings.





Existing Park System Overview / Organization

White County, along with Sparta, manage 16 different park facilities which have a combined acreage of roughly ± 225 acres. Along with the County and City parks, the State-owned lands serve the community with recreational amenities and features, such as passive green space, single and multi-use walking and biking trails, rugged hiking trails, playgrounds, river access and open space for unstructured activities. The table on the following pages lists White County's assessed parks and provides a summary matrix for each park's physical amenities, and the recreation facilities they provide. Parks owned and maintained by the City of Sparta and the State of Tennessee have also been added as inventory because they are important pieces of the overall recreational experience in the county. City and State park have not been assessed in depth because they are not operated and maintained by the county.

Purpose & Process:

An inventory and assessment of White County's park and recreation system was conducted by the Consultant team, with the assistance from County staff, to understand how each park asset currently serves the community and as a baseline for future considerations for the Parks & Recreation Masterplan. Four primary items were evaluated for each park and open space: condition, function, capacity, and accessibility. Each park was assessed for potential site improvement and recreation opportunities. Including the following considerations:

- Size: Park acreage
- On-site Presence of Park Staff
- Park Summary: General description of the site, natural features, facilities and amenities (strengths and weaknesses)
- Facilities and amenities provided Recreation Provided
- General access and parking considerations including trail, greenway, and blueway connections
- Initial ideas to expand the site's recreation capacity and better meet user needs (Including utilization of active and passive areas)
- General safety and ADA compatibility

The information collected in the existing facility inventory and assessment assists in the complete evaluation of the County's existing park system and is part of the baseline for the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan.



Inventory of Existing Facilities

Table 1 - Existing Facilities Inventory (Owned by White County or White County School Board)

Map Legend	Name	Park Type	Acreage	Basketball	Baseball	Softball	Football	Soccer	Volleyball	Pickleball	Tennis	Pavilions / Picnic Tables	Bathrooms	Trails	Playgrounds	Skate Park	Disc Golf	Fishing	Dog Park	Arboretum	Amphitheater	Historic Structure / Site	Gym / Fitness Area	Pool / Splash Pad	Track	Meeting Rooms	Multi-Purpose Room	Open Green Space	Camping	Boat Launch	Wildlife Viewing	Hunting
1	¹ Babe Ruth Fields at County Fairgrounds	Neighborhood	±2.56		X																											
2	² Doyle Softball Field	Community	±20.5			X																						X				
3	Mitchell's Ford River Access Area	Regional / Special Use	±4									X						X										X		X	X	
4	Old WCMS Property	Community	±10		X	X	X	X											X				X					X				
5	Ravenscroft Peerless Mine Walking Trail & DeRossett Railroad Section House	Regional	±18											X								X						X			X	
6	³ Sunset Rock	Special Use	±1.4									X																				
7	White County Recreational Complex	Community	±136.7		X	X	X					X	X	X			X					X						X			X	
8	White County Heritage Museum	Community	±0.43										X									X				X						

¹ Fair board as partner; ² City of Doyle owned, County maintained, YMCA operated; ³ Maintained by TDOT

Table 2 - Existing Facilities Inventory (Owned by City of Sparta or In Partnership with City)

Map Legend	Name	Park Type	Acreage	Basketball	Baseball	Softball	Football	Soccer	Volleyball	Pickleball	Tennis	Pavilions / Picnic Tables	Bathrooms	Trails	Playgrounds	Skate Park	Disc Golf	Fishing	Dog Park	Arboretum	Amphitheater	Historic Structure / Site	Gym / Fitness Area	Pool / Splash Pad	Track	Meeting Rooms	Multi-Purpose Room	Open Green Space	Camping	Boat Launch	Wildlife Viewing	Hunting
9	Liberty Square Amphitheater & Skate Park	Mini Park	±0.25									X				X					X											
10	⁴ Little League Fields at YMCA	Community	±5.5		X	X																										
11	Metcalf Park / Farmer's Market	Community	±0.75									X	X		X																	
12	Mountain Bike Trail	Community	±3.0											X														X			X	
13	S. Carter Street Park	Community	±9.95									X	X	X	X			X										X		X	X	
14	Sparta Civic Center & Pearson Park	Community	±10.7		X								X		X											X		X				
15	Sparta-White County YMCA	Community	±2.3	X				X	X	X		X	X										X	X	X	X	X					
16	Wallace Smith Park	Neighborhood	±1.4	X							X	X	X		X																	

⁴ City owned, managed by Little League 5: Operated by Non-Profit Organization (YMCA), Building Owned by City of Sparta



Inventory of Existing Facilities

Table 3 - Existing Facilities Inventory (State Owned and Operated)

Map Legend	Name	Park Type	Acreage	Basketball	Baseball	Softball	Football	Soccer	Volleyball	Pickleball	Tennis	Pavilions / Picnic Tables	Bathrooms	Trails	Playgrounds	Skate Park	Disc Golf	Fishing	Dog Park	Arboretum	Amphitheater	Historic Structure / Site	Gym / Fitness Area	Pool / Splash Pad	Track	Meeting Rooms	Multi-Purpose Room	Open Green Space	Camping	Boat Launch	Wildlife Viewing	Hunting
17	⁶ Anderson Pond	Environmental	±74															X										X			X	X
18	Bridgestone / Firestone Centennial Wilderness WMA	Regional / Special Use	±20,000											X				X										X	X		X	X
19	⁷ Bridgestone Nature Reserve Chestnut Mountain	Regional / Special Use	±5932																													
20	Burgess Falls	Regional / Special Use	±275									X	X	X	X			X			X								X			X
21	Dog Cove Recreation Area	Regional / Special Use	±680											X														X			X	
22	⁸ Hampton Crossroads	Environmental	±12.9																									X			X	X
23	Lost Creek State Natural Area	Regional / Special Use	±215											X														X			X	
24	Rock House Historic Shrine & Old Stage Rd Museum	Special Use	±1.5																			X										
25	Rock Island State Park	Regional / Special Use	±883	X								X	X	X	X			X			X					X		X	X	X	X	
26	Virgin Falls State Natural Area	Regional / Special Use	±1157											X				X										X	X		X	
27	Cane Hollow Recreation Area	Special Use										X																		X	X	

⁶ Not recreational; ⁷ Owned & Operated by the Nature Conservancy; ⁸ Not recreational



Inventory of Existing Facilities

Table 4 - Existing Facilities Inventory (School Facilities in White County)

Map Legend	Name	Park Type	Acreage	Basketball	Baseball	Softball	Football	Soccer	Volleyball	Pickleball	Tennis	Pavilions / Picnic Tables	Bathrooms	Trails	Playgrounds	Skate Park	Disc Golf	Fishing	Dog Park	Arboretum	Amphitheater	Historic Structure / Site	Gym / Fitness Area	Pool / Splash Pad	Track	Meeting Rooms	Multi-Purpose Room	Open Green Space	Camping	Boat Launch	Wildlife Viewing	Hunting
1	Bon De Croft Elementary	Public School	15	X																												
2	Cassville Elementary	Public School	7.5	X											X										X							
3	Central View Elementary	Neighborhood	5.6	X		X									X													X				
4	Doyle Elementary	Public School	6.2	X	X						X	X			X																	
5	¹ Findlay Elementary	Public School	6	X	X										X																	
6	Northfield Elementary	Public School	19.7	X											X																	
7	White County Middle School	Public School	46.7	X	X	X	X	X					X		X																	
8	White County High School	Public School	48	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X										X			X				
9	Woodland Park Elementary	Public School	27.8	X											X																	

¹ White County Board of Education Office



Recreational Experiences

Table 5 - Existing Facilities & Recreation Experiences Opportunities *(This inventory is based on current conditions, some parks have capacity to expand their recreational experiences)*

Facility	Park Type	Active Use	Conservation / Passive Use	Educational / Cultural Park	Outdoor Experience / Health	Play Centered Park	Interactive Pet Park	Social / Entertainment	Utility Field / Flex Space
Babe Ruth Fields at County Fairgrounds	Neighborhood	X				X		X	X
Doyle Softball Field	Community	X							X
Mitchell's Ford River Access Area	Regional / Special Use		X	X	X			X	
Old WCMS Property	Community	X			X		X		X
Ravenscroft Peerless Mine Walking Trail & Derosset Railroad Section House	Regional		X	X	X				
Sunset Rock	Neighborhood		X					X	
White County Recreational Complex*	Community	X	X		X	X		X	X
White County History Museum	Community			X					

**Indicates parks that capture 5 different types of recreational experiences*

The White County Recreational Complex captures 5 different types of recreational experiences.

the Old UCMS property could easily be improved to capture 5 or more different type of recreational experiences.

Recreational Experiences - A Broader Look

In addition to the inventory of existing park facilities within the County's programming and management parameters, it is valuable to consider additional recreational experiences that are available for White County residents and visitors. This is especially important in evaluating potential recreational tourism and branding opportunities. Several recreational facilities offer experiences beyond properties owned and operated by White County. Some of these facilities include:

- **State Owned Public Land** - White County is home to numerous state parks with hiking trails, scenic overlooks, waterfalls, and caves that are open to the public for recreation. These parks fit into the categories of regional district parks to special use facilities. This provides a great depth of opportunity related to conservation/passive use and outdoor experience / health recreational activities, for county residents and visitors. It suggests that the county would be best served to focus on strengthening active use, educational, play centered, interactive and social facilities at a community and neighborhood park level.
- **YMCA / City of Sparta Partnership** - The non-profit, community based YMCA provides a broad range of recreation experiences beyond city and county facilities and programs. This helps to achieve a good balance of recreational experiences for county residents.



Existing Park and Recreation Operating Budget and Staff

White County, Tennessee

General Fund

Statement for Proposed Operation

For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2022

Account No.	Description	Actual 2019-2020	Actual 2020-2021	Budget 2021-2022
56700	<u>Parks and Recreation</u>			
359	Disposal Fees	\$ 144	\$ 252	\$ 0
399	Other Contracted Services (Mowing)	17,915	19,950	22,000
415	Electricity	12,560	20,367	31,000
434	Natural Gas	281	2,438	10,500
454	Water and Sewer	3,092	3,115	3,000
499	Other Supplies and Materials	38,632	88,842	38,500
791	Other Construction	27,000	0	0
Total Parks and Recreation		\$ 99,624	\$ 134,964	\$ 105,000

- A dedicated account is in place that has some long-term funds
- Existing Operation and Maintenance is generally in place

Existing Park and Recreation Staff and Organization

- There is currently no full-time staff that serves as a county park and recreation facilities, program or maintenance director
- The White County Parks and Recreation Committee serves as an Advisory Steering Committee under the County Commission. It has eight members with a governing chairman. Active members from the County Commission, the School Board and the Upper Cumberland Development District are represented on the committee.
- Denny Wayne helps coordinate park and recreation needs but does not serve as an official parks and recreation staff person



Babe Ruth Field at County Fairgrounds & Doyle Softball Field

White County Facilities

Babe Ruth Field at County Fairgrounds

Park Type: Neighborhood

Usage Type:

Size: 2.56 Acres

Park Summary: White County Fair Board owns this baseball field as a part of the overall fair property. This field is in fair condition but lacks the opportunity to expand or connect to other athletic facilities or programs. The County should review the potential for the space and confirm if it has opportunities for any additional community space programming. This would require collaboration with the Fair Board and the Babe Ruth League.



Doyle Softball Field

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 20.5 Acres

Park Summary: Community of Doyle owns this softball field along with the Doyle Community Center and walking trail. The County maintains the softball field and the YMCA operates the softball league. No staff are assigned to this location.

General Access, Safety, and ADA: Doyle Field is just a few minutes south of Sparta on 70S and closely associated with a community center and neighborhood park. Parking is adequate and the location at the end of a lane is buffered from traffic or impact to neighbors.

Possible Expansion or Improvement: This facility is well situated to serve the south end of the county. When combined with the community center and neighborhood park, there is a great opportunity to partner with the YMCA or others to expand programming at this location for outdoor workout classes and other means of promoting healthy lifestyles or to create additional field space.

Constraints or Challenges: Lack of population density and transportation options.





Mitchell's Ford River Access Area

White County Facilities



Mitchell's Ford River Access Area

Park Type: Regional/ Special Use

Usage Type:

Size: 4 Acres

Park Summary: Mitchell's Ford River access is located on White's Cave Road at the Caney Fork River. This location has a canoe/kayak launch a short walk from the parking lot as well as picnic tables and a pavilion.

General Access, Safety, and ADA: The Mitchell Ford access facility is just off White's Cave Road on Caney Creek. It is a new facility (2020) and not yet complete. Safety and directional signage would be a good addition. Further improving the path from the new footbridge to the water would improve accessibility for all abilities.

Possible Expansion or Improvement:

- Improved signage, further improvement to the surface and width of the access trail
- Planning for a wheelchair accessible lift to the loft of the gathering space. Additional hand rails should be provided in the structure.
- Fishing piers and boat launches with adaptive features would improve accessibility for people of all ages and abilities
- This facility's close proximity to Dog Cove recreation, Lost Creek State Natural Area, Virgin Falls and Bridgestone WMA lends itself to serve as an outdoor environmental education and outdoor adventure hub.
- This facility has a strong potential for additional nature-based play facilities and programs

Constraints or Challenges:

- Need to identify funding sources for continued improvements
- Travel distance from other county facilities





Sunset Rock & White County Heritage Museum

White County Facilities

Sunset Rock

Park Type: Special Use

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 1.4 Acres

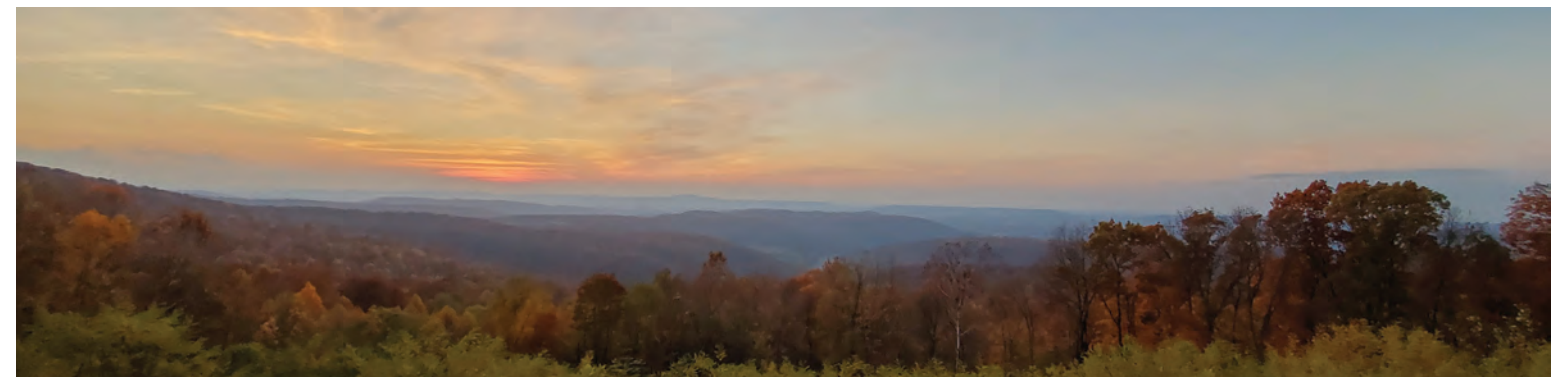
Park Summary: Sunset Rock is a scenic overlook along Highway 70 that has views for miles over the valley. The location has recently received updates which include a new pavilion and a picnic table.

General Access & Safety:

The site has good access and parking but limited visibility for drivers exiting or entering from the State Highway. Caution signs and better directional /entry signs could help in coordination with TDOT.

Possible Improvements:

- Because of its central location, easy access and stunning views, this site is a good location for countywide potential historical and environmental signage or displays. Sunset Rock could be utilized as the starting or ending point of a historical and cultural day trip itinerary.



White County Heritage Museum

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 0.43 Acres

Park Summary: Located one block from the Courthouse, the White County Heritage Museum celebrates more than 200 years of White County history.





Old WCMS Property

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 10 Acres

Park Summary: The former White County Middle School property has multiple open athletic fields, a gymnasium and several storage buildings on site. The property is a prime location for youth soccer and football leagues.

General Access, Safety and General ADA:

- This site has good vehicular and pedestrian access from the surrounding neighborhood and ample parking area, but there are no accessible/ADA parking spaces or accessible hard surface routes/ sidewalks connecting to existing buildings and fields. Much of the existing parking lot is currently gravel.
- The existing gymnasium is currently being used by a private organization that provides high-level basketball training.
- There is an additional building on site that is in disrepair. It's currently used for storage. Any programming for this building could require investment to address safety and ADA concerns.

Possible Expansion or Improvements:

- This park has great potential for additional program and facilities expansion. Utilization of the field space can include soccer, ultimate frisbee, disc golf, lacrosse and general athletic practice and open play.
- This property would be a good place for a walking trail and multi-modal connection to the surrounding neighborhood and the historic downtown.
- This property needs more shade, seating and social gathering space. It is a good candidate for additions of shade structures, playgrounds and a possible tree arboretum.



Ravenscroft Peerless Mine & DeRossett Railroad Section House

White County Facilities

Ravenscroft Peerless Mine Walking Trail & DeRossett Railroad Section House

Park Type: Regional

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 18 Acres

Park Summary: The DeRossett Railroad Section House Museum is housed on the original Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway section house which was built in 1904, that was used to house work crews of the N,C&SL Railway. The Ravenscroft Mine and Walking Trail is located approximately two miles from the DeRossett Railroad Section House Museum on Glade Creek Road. The walking trail and park features descriptive signage of the former mine, a walking trail and picnic areas.

General Access, Safety and General ADA:

This property is operated and managed by the Bon Air Mountain Historical Society. The site has been upgraded with ADA parking, walkways and benches, but may need additional ADA access provisions to the building.

Possible Expansion or Improvements:

There are good opportunities to expand a natural surface trail on the 18-acre property along with additional historical markers and signage. The site also provides good access to natural and environmental experiences. This site could become part of a county wide historic/cultural day trip experience for residents and visitors.





White County Recreational Complex

White County Facilities



White County Recreational Complex

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 136.7 Acres

Park Summary: Located west of Sparta on Smithville Highway, this large facility is the main flagship park for White County. It has a youth football field, a baseball quad, playground, concessions, a walking/biking trail and a disc golf course that is planned soon. A vast majority of this park is still unprogrammed and could benefit from a park master plan to fully develop and utilize the park.

General Access, Safety and General ADA:

This park provides countywide recreational opportunities and is easily accessed off S.R. 70. It serves to help meet recreational needs on the western side of the county for residents who are not in close proximity to the city parks in Sparta. The park lacks designated ADA parking and needs. Hard surface sidewalks to make better ADA connections to the playground and athletic fields. The park needs all around attention to improve parking, hard surface plaza areas, fencing and general maintenance.

Possible Expansion and Improvements:

This park has great potential for the expansion of both active and passive facilities and programs. The natural, wooded hillside has opportunities to expand the natural walking and biking trails. There is plenty of room for picnic shelters and more playgrounds. Shade, shelter and social gathering space should be programmed into the park. The existing building on site could be utilized for a natural play and environmental/outdoor adventure space.





Liberty Square Amphitheater & Little League Fields at YMCA

City of Sparta Facilities

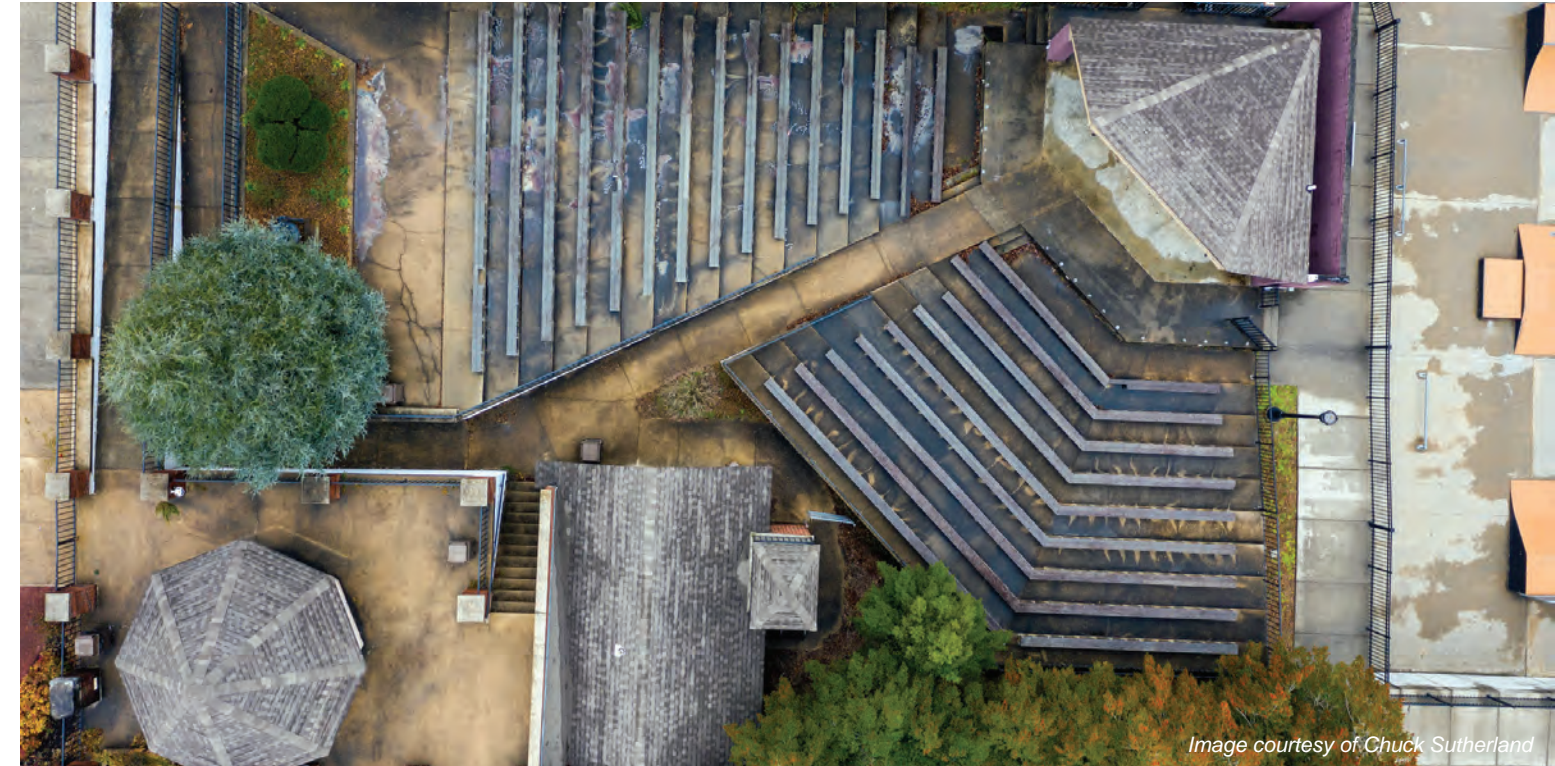
Liberty Square Amphitheater & Skate Park

Park Type: Mini Park

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 0.25 Acres

Park Summary: Located in the heart of Downtown Sparta, the 250-seat Liberty Square Amphitheater is a great venue for community events and concerts. Adjacent to the amphitheater is the skate park that features numerous prefab metal ramps and rails. Programming partnerships between the city and county to promote community wide events that celebrate the historic downtown square.



Little League Fields at YMCA

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 5.5 Acres

Park Summary: Located behind the YMCA, the City of Sparta owns 4 youth baseball fields. Although the fields are city owned and on the leased YMCA property, the fields are managed by the Little League. These fields currently have limited use during the off-season months. The Little League organization, city, county and YMCA leadership should discuss possibilities for creating improved fields for the Little League organization at this location or a different site like the old WCMS property or facilities at the White County Recreation Complex, allowing for possible expansion of YMCA facilities and programs at this site.





Metcalf Park /Farmer's Market & Mountain Bike Trail

City of Sparta Facilities



Image courtesy of www.exploresparta.com

Metcalf Park / Farmer's Market

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 0.75 Acres

Park Summary: Metcalf Park is home to the Sparta Farmer's Market. This facility has covered parking for venders along with bathrooms on site. This facility provides an opportunity to host multiple community events.



Image courtesy of www.spartalive.com

Mountain Bike Trail

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 3.0 Acres

Park Summary: The one-mile trail design and construction was completed entirely by volunteers. The City of Sparta allowed volunteers to use city property and donated money for fencing and signage. It would be beneficial to coordinate efforts with the Mountain Bike Clubs organization in Tennessee that has established trails at the White County Recreational Complex. The mountain bike trail in Sparta is not well publicized.



South Carter Street Park

City of Sparta Facilities

South Carter Street Park

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 9.95 Acres

Park Summary: South Carter Street Park is a riverfront park along the Calfkiller River close to Downtown Sparta. This popular park features pavilions, picnic tables, playgrounds, restrooms and a greenway and sees use at all times of the day. South Carter Park is of primary importance to meeting parks and recreational demand in White County. It provides very important access to the Calfkiller River and serves as a trailhead to the only formal multi-modal greenway in the county. Opportunities for this park include stronger wayfinding signage and connections to the historic downtown area. A multi-modal greenway, this extension that links the park to the White County Heritage Museum, the downtown square, amphitheater, courthouse and places of commerce would be a great benefit to both residents and visitors to the county. This park can serve as a draw for tourists as well as local residents.



Image courtesy of www.exploresparta.com



Sparta Civic Center & Pearson Park

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 10.7 Acres

Park Summary: The Sparta Civic Center and Pearson Park are located on the same property. Pearson Park consists of a playground, a paved walking trail, a baseball field, a pavilion, charcoal grills, and restroom facilities. This park serves to help meet recreational demands for the center and eastern side of the county. It has a good balance of passive and active recreation. This park may be a good location for additional walking trail opportunities.





Sparta-White County YMCA & Wallace Smith Park

City of Sparta Facilities

Sparta-White County YMCA

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 2.3 Acres

Park Summary: The Sparta-White County YMCA is located in the former elementary school that is still owned by the City of Sparta. The YMCA leases the building and runs all programming. This facility does a great job at providing recreational facilities and programs that require staff, high-level operations and maintenance. It is one possible site for a future splash pad location.



Wallace Smith Park

Park Type: Neighborhood

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 1.4 Acres

Park Summary: This well programmed neighborhood park contains a playground, basketball court, tennis, a pavilion with charcoal grills and restroom facilities. It provides a good example of how local parks can be accessible to surrounding residential development. There is a good opportunity to better link this park to the river and the existing greenway.



Image courtesy of Google Earth



Anderson Pond

Park Type: Environmental

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 74 Acres

Park Summary: Anderson Pond is a TWRA Public Hunting Area. Unlike the TWRA Wildlife Management Area (WMA), this land is not intensively managed for wildlife protection and public use.



Bridgestone/Firestone Centennial Wilderness WMA

State Facilities

Bridgestone/Firestone Centennial Wilderness WMA

Park Type: Community

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 20,000 Acres

***Park Summary:** Known as the “Grand Canyon of the South,” full of wild wonders, waterfalls and worry- free fun, the Bridgestone Firestone Centennial Wilderness WMA offers breathtaking vistas and awe-inspiring landscape. Enjoy hiking and primitive camping all overlooking gorgeous gorges and waterfalls. Open year-round; closed only for non-hunting activities during the Big Game hunting season.



**Summary information courtesy of whitecountyttn.gov*



Bridgestone Nature Reserve at Chestnut Mountain

Nature Conservancy Owned



Image courtesy of The Nature Conservancy

Bridgestone Nature Reserve at Chestnut Mountain

Park Type: Regional/ Special Use

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 5932 Acres

***Park Summary:** In the early 1970s, not long before The Nature Conservancy (TNC) opened an office in Tennessee, the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company acquired land in White County to eventually use as a corporate retreat. When Bridgestone acquired Firestone in 1988, the property remained undeveloped. In 2018, Bridgestone Americas, Inc. donated the 5,763-acre parcel to TNC—the largest gift in our history of working in Tennessee.

Today, TNC staff and partners, including several scientists, are hard at work conducting research to inventory biodiversity at the site to inform future decisions about conservation, restoration and public use.

Currently, the Reserve is not open to visitors. Once TNC has a better idea of the Reserve's plant and animal species, and associated needs, it will plan for public uses that are compatible with protecting the property's natural values.



Image courtesy of Byron Jorjorian & The Nature Conservancy

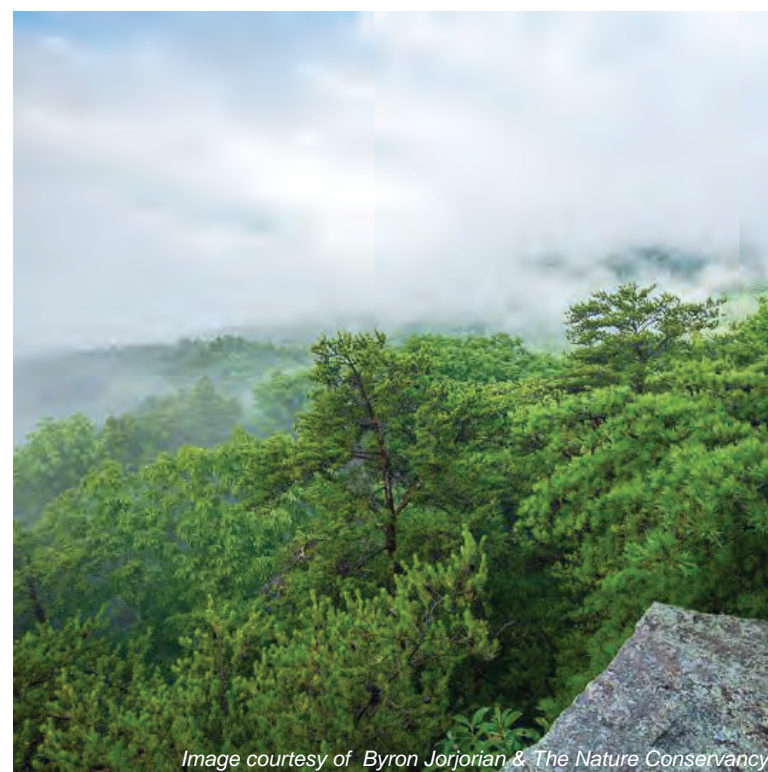


Image courtesy of Byron Jorjorian & The Nature Conservancy

*Summary information courtesy of The Nature Conservancy



Burgess Falls & Dog Cove Recreation Area

State Facilities

Burgess Falls

Park Type: Regional / Special Use

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 275 Acres

***Park Summary:** Enjoy the beauty of three majestic waterfalls, and a series of cascades. Named as one of the Top Five Places to Cool Off in Tennessee by Southern Living, Burgess Falls Park is located in the northwest portion of the county at the Putnam County border.

**Summary information courtesy of whitecountyttn.gov*

Dog Cove Recreation Area

Park Type: Regional / Special Use

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 680 Acres

Park Summary: Dog Cove is the home to 680 acres of caves, creeks, bluffs, habitat for plants and animals and the historic Beecher Wallace homestead.





Hampton Crossroads

Park Type: Environmental

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 12.9 Acres

Park Summary: Hampton Crossroads is a TWRA Public Hunting Area. Unlike a WMA, this land is not intensively managed for wildlife protection and public use.



Lost Creek State Natural Area

Park Type: Regional/Special Use

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 215 Acres

Park Summary: Lost Creek State Natural Area was obtained by the state thanks to a generous gift from the Rylander family. The highlight of the natural area is the 40' waterfall which emerges from a large spring and disappears underground. Lost Creek State Natural Area is also home to the Lost Creek Cave, which is one of the largest in Tennessee. Lost Creek Cave is a popular recreational cave and has 5 entrances with over 7 miles of mapped passages.



Rock Island State Park & Virgin Falls State Natural Area

State Facilities

Rock Island State Park

Park Type: Regional/Special Use

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 883 Acres

Park Summary: Rock Island offers more than 880 acres where you can play, fish, kayak, swim or hike. Cabins are available for rental to suit many group sizes. Located in the southwest portion of White County at the Warren County border.

*Summary information courtesy of whitecountyttn.gov

Virgin Falls State Natural Area

Park Type: Regional/Special Use

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 1157 Acres

Park Summary: This natural area was named after the 110' tall waterfall. The natural area has several caves, and miles of moderately difficult hiking trails





Rock House Historic Shrine & Old Stage Rd Museum

Park Type: Special Use

Usage Type: Active / Passive

Size: 1.5 Acres

***Park Summary:** The Rock House Shrine, a famous stage coach stop and early American frontier home, is located on scenic Hwy 70E 4-miles from Sparta along the old wilderness trail and the historic "Broadway of America". Built in 1835-1838 by Barlow Fiske, the Rock House served as a stopover for travelers going from frontier settlements in the West to more "civilized" areas along the Atlantic coast. Fiske operated a stagecoach inn and stables. Some famous visitors to the Rock House include Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk, Presidents of the United States stopping on their way to Washington D.C., as well as other notable visitors including Sam Houston and Frank Clement, former governors of Tennessee.

*Summary information courtesy of whitecountyttn.gov



Cane Hollow Recreation Area

Park Type: Special Use

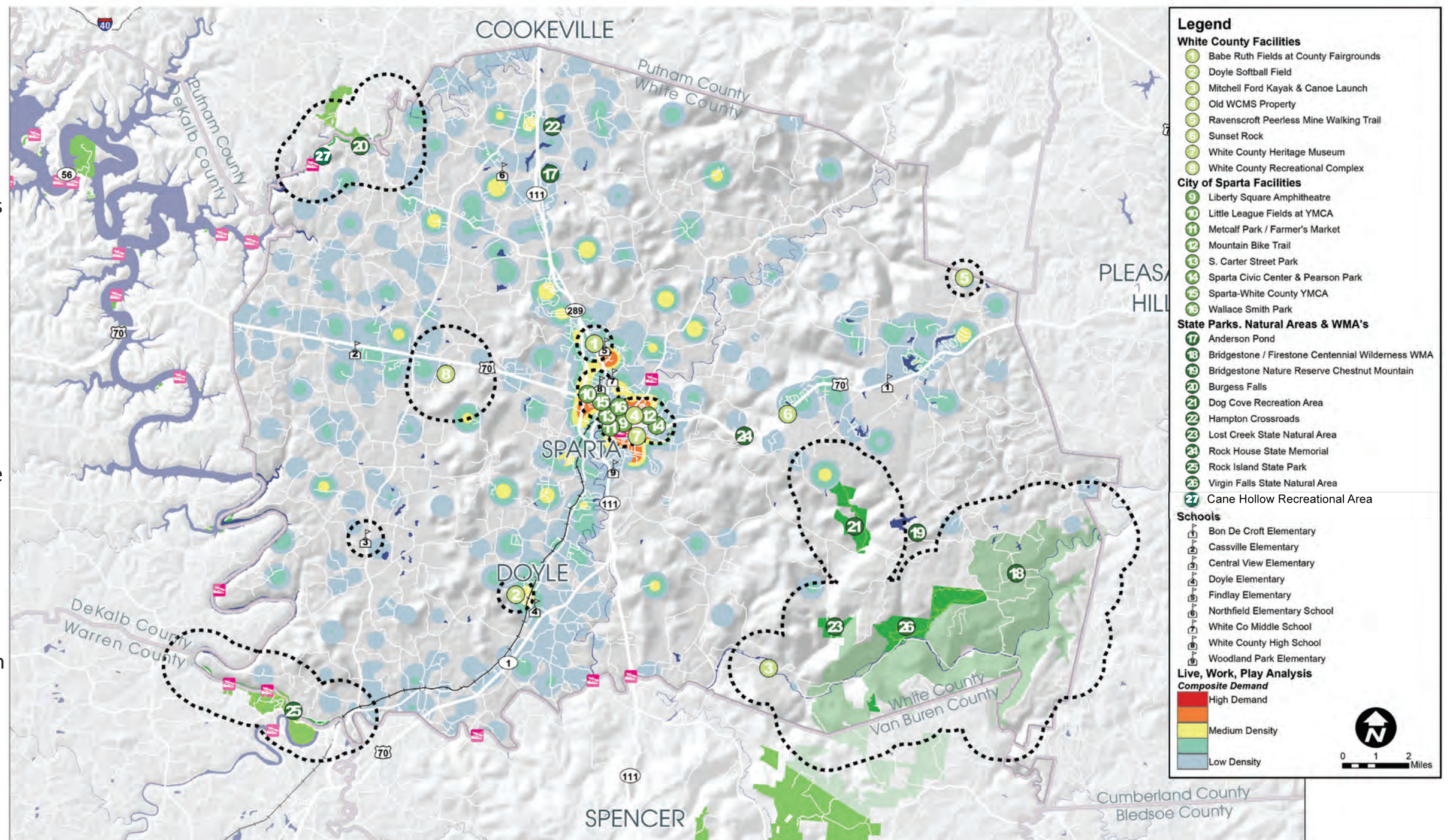
Usage Type: Active / Passive

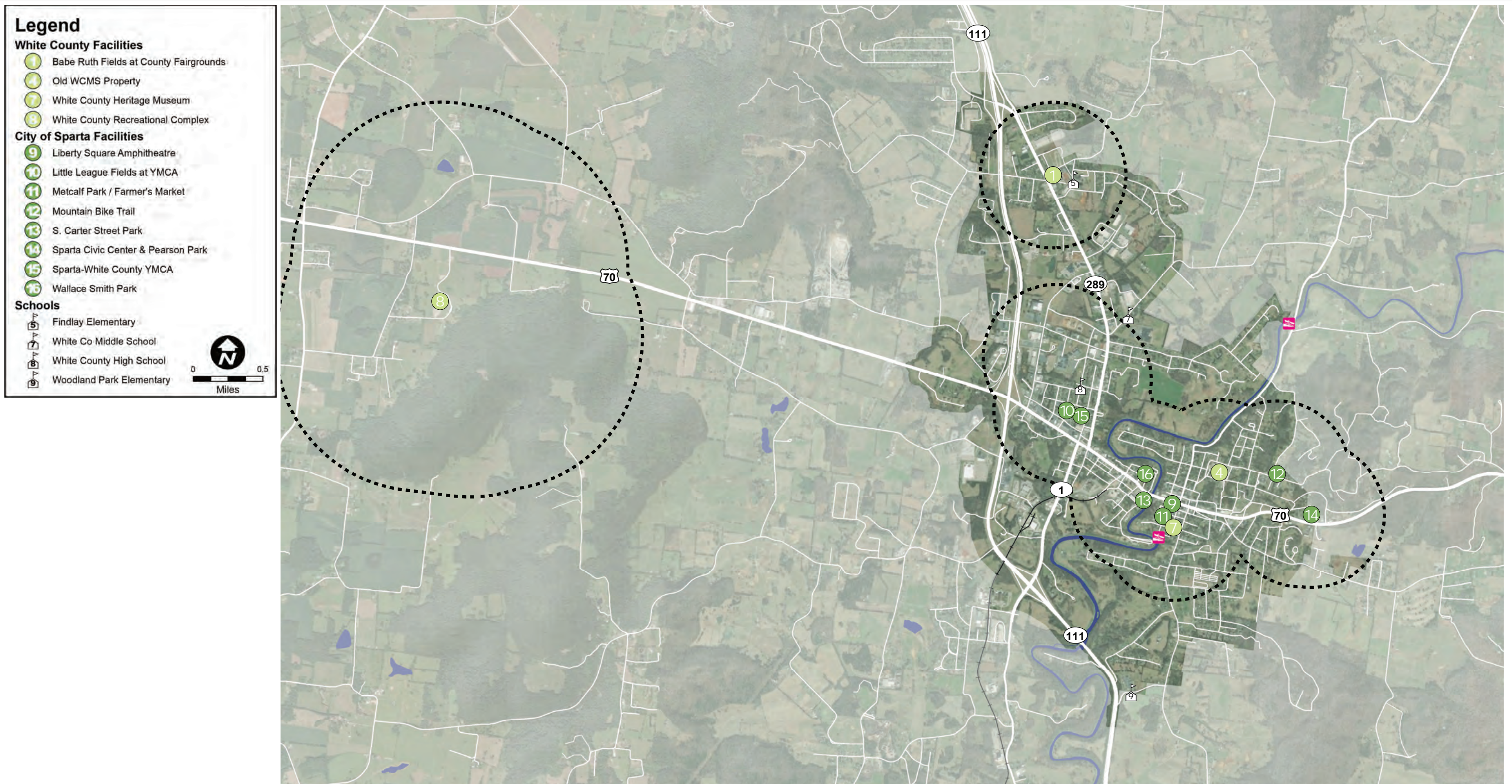
Size:

***Park Summary:** Cane Hollow Recreation Area is used as an access point to Burgess Falls and Francher Falls. These waterfalls are staples of their community and create an interest in recreational activities. The trip to Burgess Falls is about 2 miles each way and the trip to Francher is an all-day trip.

Composite Demand & Service Analysis Overview:

This composite demand analysis map combines the densities of where people live, work, and play to identify the areas of greatest demand for parks and recreation facilities. This is an important analysis because it shows where people are spending most of their time. Most park users originate from their homes, places of work or where they go for entertainment or social interaction. Service areas provided from existing parks are projected over the demand analysis. By looking at both demand and service area together, the gaps in recreational facilities and programs are identified. This provides a general evaluation of the park system from a geographical perspective. The analysis shows a strong composite demand and service in Downtown Sparta. As well as growth corridors on major arterials to the west towards Smithville and north towards Cookeville. State parks and natural areas provide exceptional outdoor recreational services for the Southwest, Southeast and Northwest portions to the County.





State, National & Regional Recreation Trends

Recreational Trends



Demographics

Supply & Demand: Projected Population 29,728 people by 2030

Increase Neighborhood Parkland & Facilities and connect them with greenways and trails. One of the best ways to increase a park's use and value is to connect it to another park and community space.

(National Recreation & Park Association standard)

Health & Wellness: Tennessee Adults have the 3rd highest incidence of obesity in the U.S.

Wellness Education & Outreach

- Fitness stations with exercise instructions
- Obstacle course playgrounds (all ages)
- Health and wellness outreach at park facilities
- Teaching healthy cooking and eating habits

Funding & Cooperative Management



Joint Use Agreements: Take advantage of combining resources, funding and uses

Cooperative Use Trends

- PARTAs or Park and School Agreements
- Land Trusts and public access to conserved lands
- Local farms and agricultural connections / gathering
- Other public open space
- Consolidating services (social and community services)



Beyond Ballfields

What are other Communities Doing/ Outside the Box?

- The public score trails and blueways at the top for desired recreation amenities both in Tennessee and nationally
- Parks departments are increasingly working with other land managers (State, Federal, and land trusts) to provide natural parks where trails and nature are the focus

Activity and Use Trends

- Nature playgrounds
- Natural area micro-habitat enhancement
- Blueways and greenways
- Natural surface trails as community connectors
- Indoor recreational centers offering multiple uses
- Group outdoor and specialty yoga

Regional Precedents & Application



Stringers Ridge Park (Chattanooga, TN)-Natural surface trails provide large benefits at reduced costs compared to paved trails.



Jonesborough TN-Downtown Farmers Market (indoor and outdoor space) provides year-round access to healthy food.



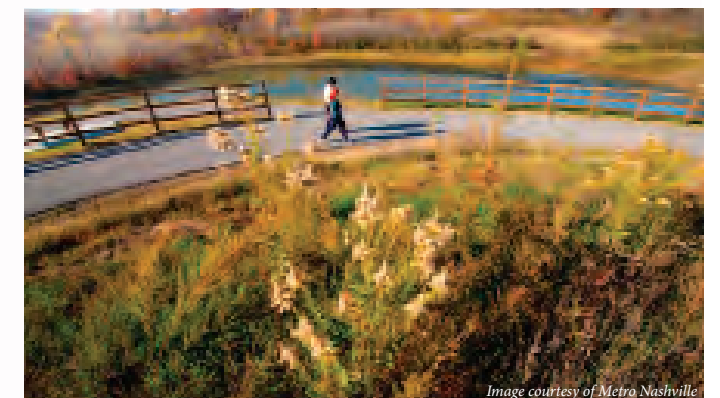
Nature Playground (Knoxville, TN)-Simple play elements like logs and boulders encourage adaptable play.



Bays Mountain Park in Kingsport, TN is a 3,500 acre nature preserve and is the largest city-owned park in Tennessee.



The Urban Wilderness (Knoxville, TN) ties multiple parks, three quarry lakes, and over 60-miles of natural surface trails together. The parks department contracts with concessionaires to provide outfitting services.



Shelby Bottoms Greenway (Nashville, TN) offers miles of shared-uses pathways along the banks of the Cumberland River.



State, National & Regional Recreation Trends



Community Gathering Spaces

Growing together as a community:

- Agricultural centers and environmental/nature education centers are increasingly ways parks departments and involving the community.
- Community centers continue to be places for exercise, recreation, and a place to meet members of the community.

Activity and Use Trends

- Agricultural centers
- Nature education
- Eco-centers: Ecological and environmental education
- Community/Event centers
- Community gardens



Activate the Outdoors

Collaborative Outdoor Programming

Work with other public and private partners to provide programming that gets citizens into the outdoors. Guided programmed events encourage the community to try new types of recreation and meet others with whom they can continue to adventure with.

Joint Promotion

Cities, counties, tourism bureaus, and non-profits, collaborate on a “one-stop shop” for outdoor recreation programs and access. This is usually in the form of a website, but can also be done through the media, and other means.

Commercial Partnerships/Concessions

Many parks and recreation departments are beginning to allow concessions or leasing of park space to commercial entities that can “activate” or draw users to a park. This could include the likes of food trucks, outfitter rentals (kayaks or bikes), or other commercial ventures that support park users. Races and other events especially support these vendors and activate park space.

Activity and Use Trends/

Collaborative Outdoor Programming

- Paddling: collaborate with the State, non-profits, and local outfitters
- Hiking trips: collaborating with naturalists, storytellers, etc.
- Biking/running: setup group rides/runs, especially for beginners
- Frisbee golf: work with local clubs to develop intro experiences

Activity and Use Trends/

Joint Promotion

- Develop region/county wide outdoor recreation “one-stop shop” website or page for all things outdoor recreation related. The web page is owned by one partner but information input is by many others.

Activity and Use Trends/

Commercial Partnerships

- Assess what commercial opportunities complement the mission of parks and recreation. Lease/MOU agreements are typically developed.



Memphis TN- Agricenter International, “Discover the Forest” class. The education program focuses on agriculture, forestry, and natural resources.

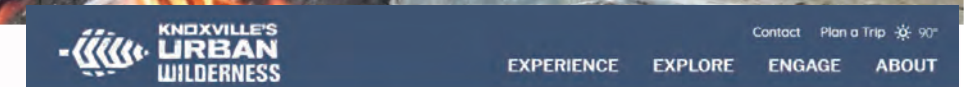


City of Murfreesboro's Wilderness Station in Barfield Crescent Park features hiking, mountain bike trails, a nature center and a back county campground.



Outdoor Chattanooga is a division of the City of Chattanooga government. Their goal is to connect citizens and visitors to outdoor recreation. They host a website that has comprehensive outdoor recreation opportunities but really excel in providing lots of programming, including cycling 101, archery, bike group rides, hiking series, kayak tours, family days, climbing 101, intro to mountain biking, and more.

The City of Knoxville and their Tourism Development Authority collaborate on a website dedicated to parks and programming assets of the Urban Wilderness.



Knoxville's Urban Wilderness is a spectacular outdoor adventure area where you can hike, bike, climb, paddle, or just wander in the woods – all within the heart of the city. Over 50 miles of trails and greenways connect you to a beautiful nature center, pristine lakes, historic sites, dramatic quarries, adventure playgrounds, five city parks, and a 500-acre wildlife area. There's an adventure for everyone! Be sure to check out the monthly [Outdoor Knoxville Podcast](#) on Soundcloud!



TRAIL CONDITIONS



GATEWAY PROJECT



OUTDOOR KNOXVILLE PODCAST



NRPA Comparison

Comparison of Facilities

A general comparison of how White County measures with national averages can be achieved by looking at NRPA typical levels of service for communities of the same population size. It is important to note that these measurements are broad and general in nature. White County has specific attributes that do not exactly equate to national averages. The NRPA measurements provide a snap shot of strengths and weaknesses to consider when shaping long range plans for the County. These NRPA service levels should not be interpreted as a direct recommendation for capitol improvement dollars, required facility improvements, or budget commitments. White County will have unique needs and conditions that are not directly reflected in these national averages.

Using NRPA standards as a general evaluation to identify strengths and weaknesses as well as the metric figures for a community between 20,000 & 49,999, the following needs assessments should be considered:

- Park acreage per 1000 people is 10.6 acres. This equates to 331 acres for White County by 2040, suggesting the county target an additional 104 acres per NRPA standards
- An evaluation of combined city and county staff and expenses would help us understand future needs
- Consideration of current staffing and expenses covered by the non-profit efforts (YMCA) would help us understand future needs

NRPA Comparisons (2020 Data)

	Typical NRPA Median (Communities 20k-50k)	Current Amount	Current Comparison (27,650 Population*) County Agency	2030 Comparison (29,728 Population)**	2040 Comparison (31,207 Population)**
Park Acreage	10.6 Acres per 1,000 people (Communities 20k-50k)	227 Acres	293 Acres	315 Acres	Need Additional 104 Acres
Operating Expense by Agency Size	\$3,500,000 (Communities 20k-50k)	\$105,000***	Additional 1 Million Plus	Additional 1 Million Plus	Additional 1 Million Plus
Operating Expense Per Capita	\$79-\$110 Per Capita (Communities less than 10 parks- Communities 20k-50k)	Approximately \$4 Per Capita***	Target including City and County would be approximately \$80 Per Capita	Target including City and County would be approximately \$80 Per Capita	Target including City and County would be approximately \$80 Per Capita
Staff (Full Time Equivalents)	10 FTE (Communities 20k-50k)	Currently None***	Target would be to increase staff by at least 3+ FTE	Target would be to increase staff by at least 3+ FTE	Target would be to increase staff by at least 3+ FTE
Operating Expense Per Number of Parks	Less than 10 parks \$1,670,288	\$105,000	Additional 1 Million Plus	Additional 1 Million Plus	Additional 1 Million Plus

* Population figures estimated for the county have been adjusted by subtracting the City of Sparta population figures from the 2020 county census data (4,947) figures. This adjustment helps consider that the City has its own park system and budget.

**Population projections from University of Tennessee (Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research)

***Per Capita Expenses and Park Employees appear lower than NRPA standards partially due to the expenses and staff contributions from the City of Sparta and non-profit organizations like the YMCA.



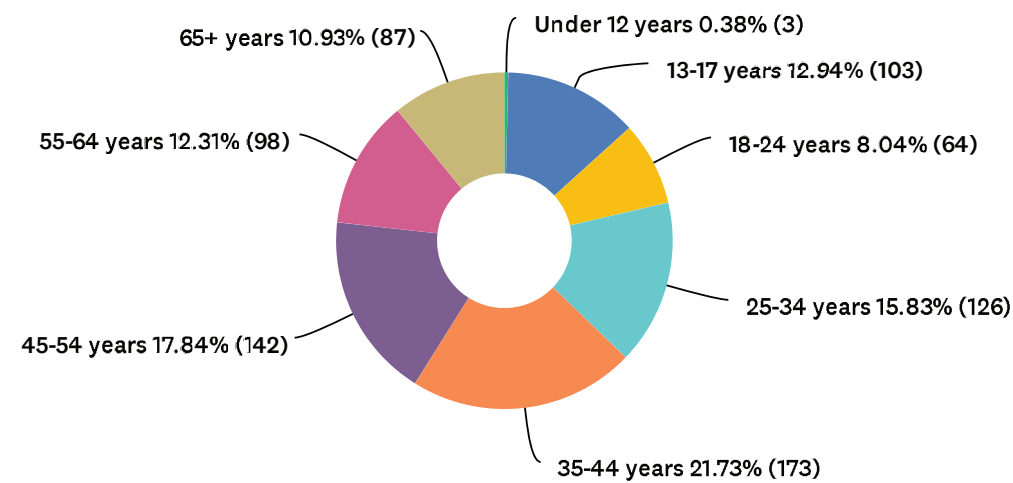
Comparison to Similar Counties

Comparison Counties Overview														
Factor	WHITE	JACKSON	PUTNAM	CANNON	CROCKETT	DECATUR	GRUNDY	HOUSTON	LEWIS	MEIGS	PERRY	STEWART	TROUSDALE	MAURY
Area (SM)	379	308.32	401.1	265.63	265.53	333.84	360.53	200.29	282.09	195.12	414.73	459.3	114.19	616
Population- County 2019	26800	11,786	80,245	14,678	14,230	11,663	13,427	8201	12268	12,422	80766	13715	11284	91,976
Change since 2010	13%	1.30%	11.00%	6.40%	-2.40%	-0.80%	-2.00%	-2.70%	0.90%	5.70%	2%	2.90%	43.40%	21%
County Seat		959	34,706	2,889	2,277	862	1,067	1,280	3,813	1,667	956	1,546	11,012	
65+	20.50%	22.00%	16.60%	18.40%	18.60%	23.40%	20.50%	20.90%	20.50%	21.70%	20.50%	19.60%	13.90%	16.80%
Households	20,770	4,566	31,424	5,488	5,491	4,440	4,820	2,878	4,715	4,938	3,073	5,178	3,189	66,039
Median HH Income	41998	\$35,207	\$44,259	\$55,330	44,717	42,031	40,516	42,711	37,277	49,167	41,034	45,809	56,321	57,170
Education-% BA/Higher	12.70%	11.00%	26.40%	15.80%	13.80%	14.80%	13.20%	13%	10.40%	9.80%	11.50%	15.60%	13.80%	24%
Poverty Level	16.20%	17.10%	18.90%	15.80%	17.80%	17.60%	22.70%	16.80%	19.50%	16.90%	26.90%	13.80%	10.20%	10.10%
Broadband-%	74.70%	64.80%	77.80%	70.20%	70.60%	71.90%	65.70%	70.50%	59.80%	67.60%	61%	66.90%	70.70%	84.40%
Location-Non-Metro/Micro	NM	MICRO	MICRO-SAME	METRO	METRO	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	NM	METRO	METRO	NM
No Interstate	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	
Middle Tennessee /So KY	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parks & Rec Dept/ Dedicated Staff		NONE		NONE	NONE		NONE	NONE			NONE	NONE		
Budget	80,000	\$-	36,675,709	\$28,465	8,877	213,334	\$-	\$-	146260	146260	27687	27687	\$106,168	\$853,985
Share on Budget	0	0.00%	2.70%	0.50%	0.10%	2.80%	0	0	2.3	2.3	0.6	0.6	2	
Staffing	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1.5	1.5	-	-	1.5	4
# Parks Operated	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
# Rec/CC/MP Sites Operated	3	-	25	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	5
Estimated Acreage-Active Use		7.20%	420%	20.70%		13.80%			20.20%	20.20%			22.90%	10%
General				3	2	8	9	7	9	8	9	4	3	

- The counties compared to White County vary in size and budget, but all consist of rural counties with populations less than 100,000. Many large areas of state park, natural areas and river corridors that pass through the county.
- Budgets for rural county parks systems vary greatly (ranging from none to 36 million) with White County falling in the mid range on these comparisons at \$80,000. The county should anticipate the need to sustainably increase its operations and maintenance budget as the population grows and more facilities and programs are added. A good target would be a 2% share of the county budget.
- Many rural counties do not have full-time park and recreation staff members. Providing a strong and active parks and recreation committee along with a solid volunteer base can help overcome this. White County should anticipate dedicating at least one person on staff to help direct and maintain park facilities and programs in the near future. The city and the county could share in the maintenance cost of park facilities to increase the efficiency and benefits of personnel and equipment.

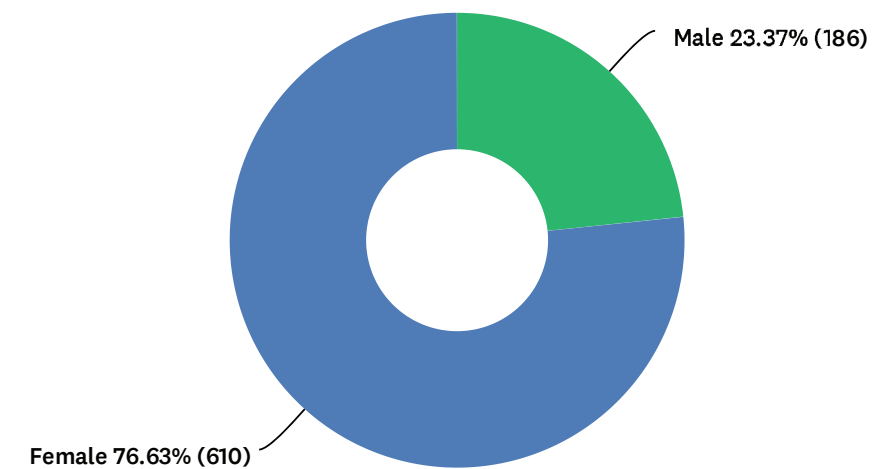
Q1 Indicate your age

Answered: 796 Skipped: 1



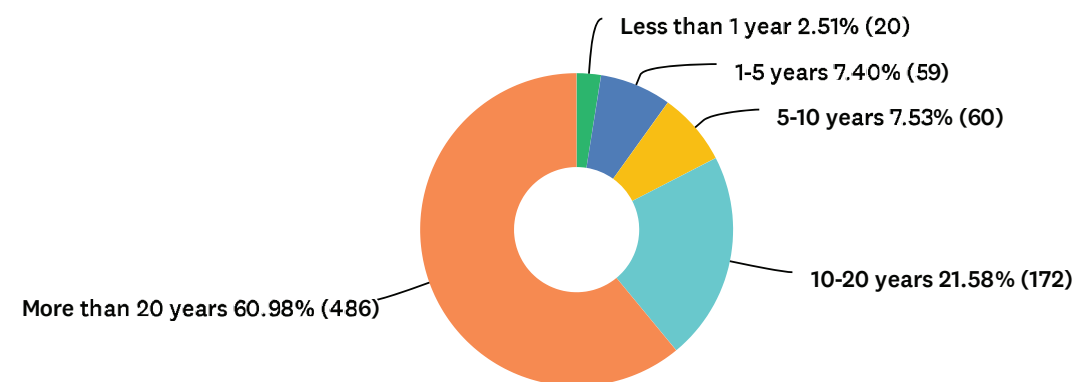
Q2 What is your gender?

Answered: 796 Skipped: 1



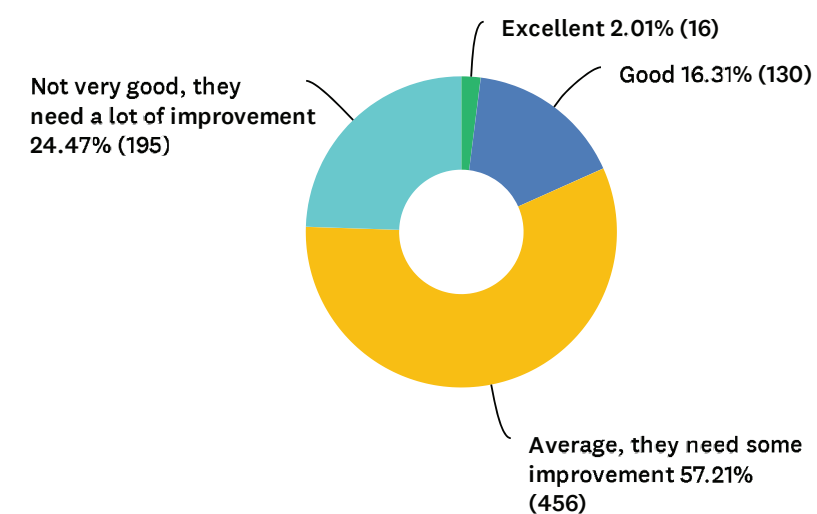
Q3 How long have you lived in White County?

Answered: 797 Skipped: 0



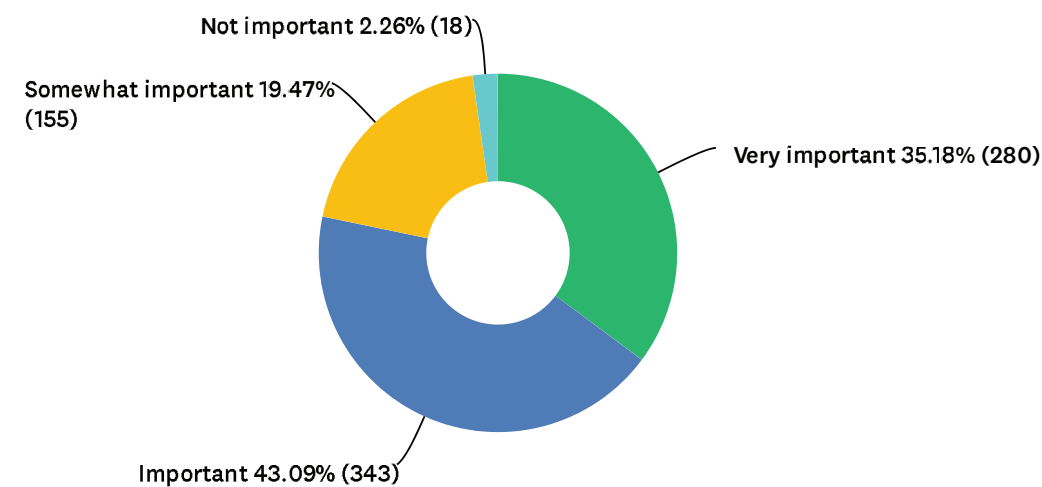
Q4 What are your general impressions of the current parks and recreation systems in White County?

Answered: 797 Skipped: 0



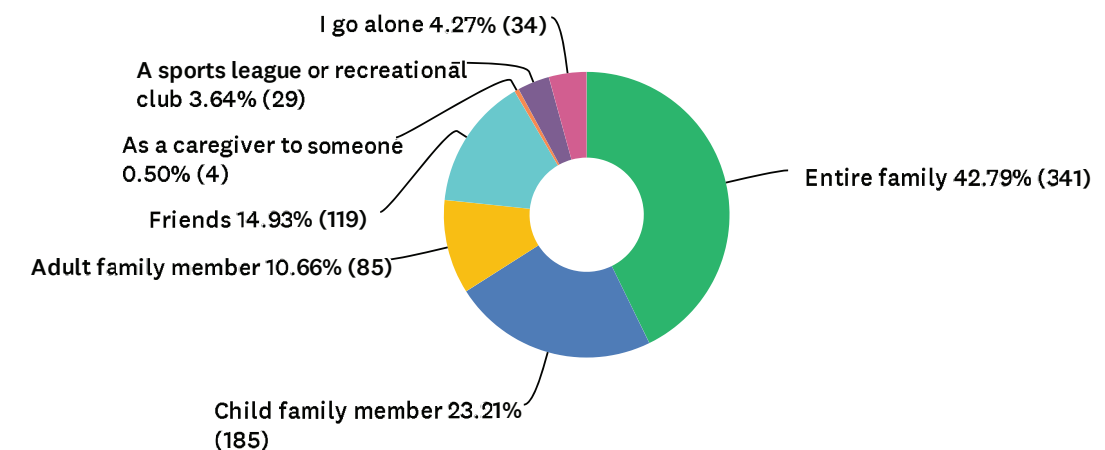
Q5 How important are parks and recreation to your quality of life?

Answered: 796 Skipped: 1



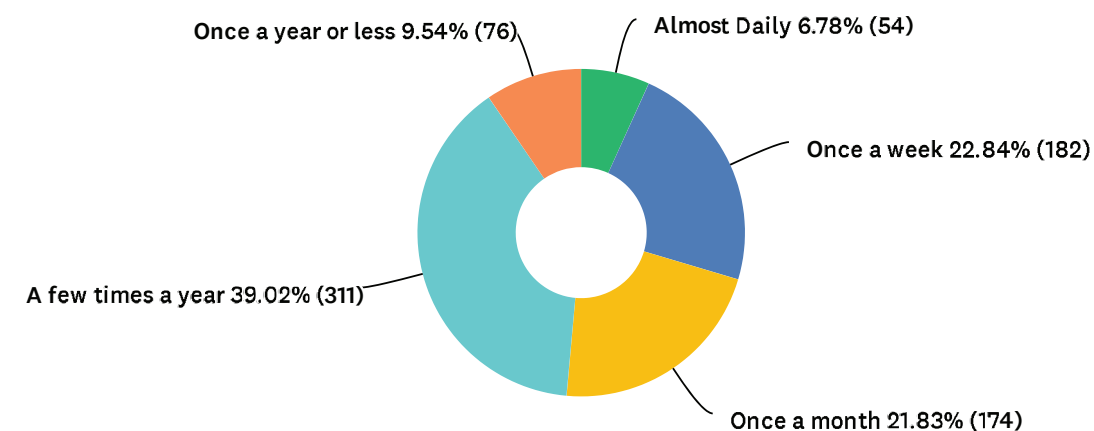
Q6 When you visit a park or recreation facility, with whom do you usually go?

Answered: 797 Skipped: 0



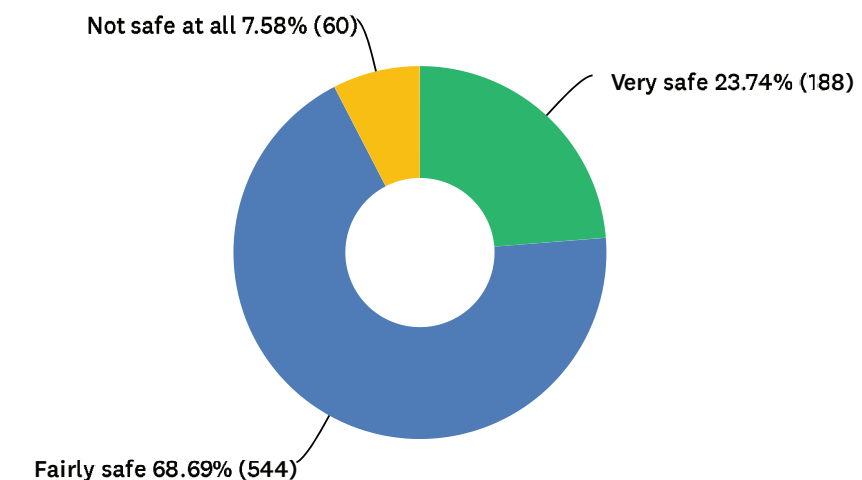
Q7 How often do you visit park and recreation facilities in White County?

Answered: 797 Skipped: 0



Q8 Do you feel safe when you are using park and recreation facilities in White County?

Answered: 792 Skipped: 5

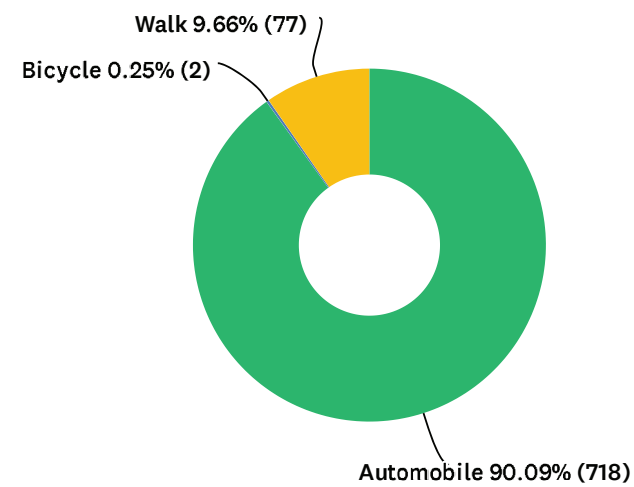




Public Input - Online Survey

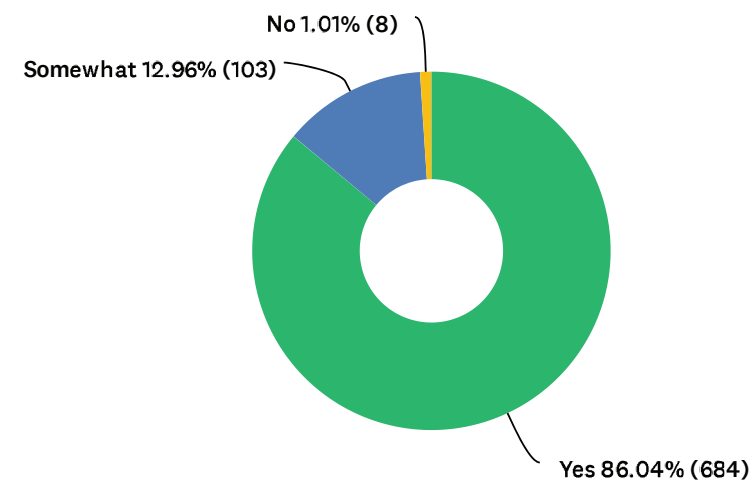
Q9 How do you normally access park and recreation facilities?

Answered: 797 Skipped: 0



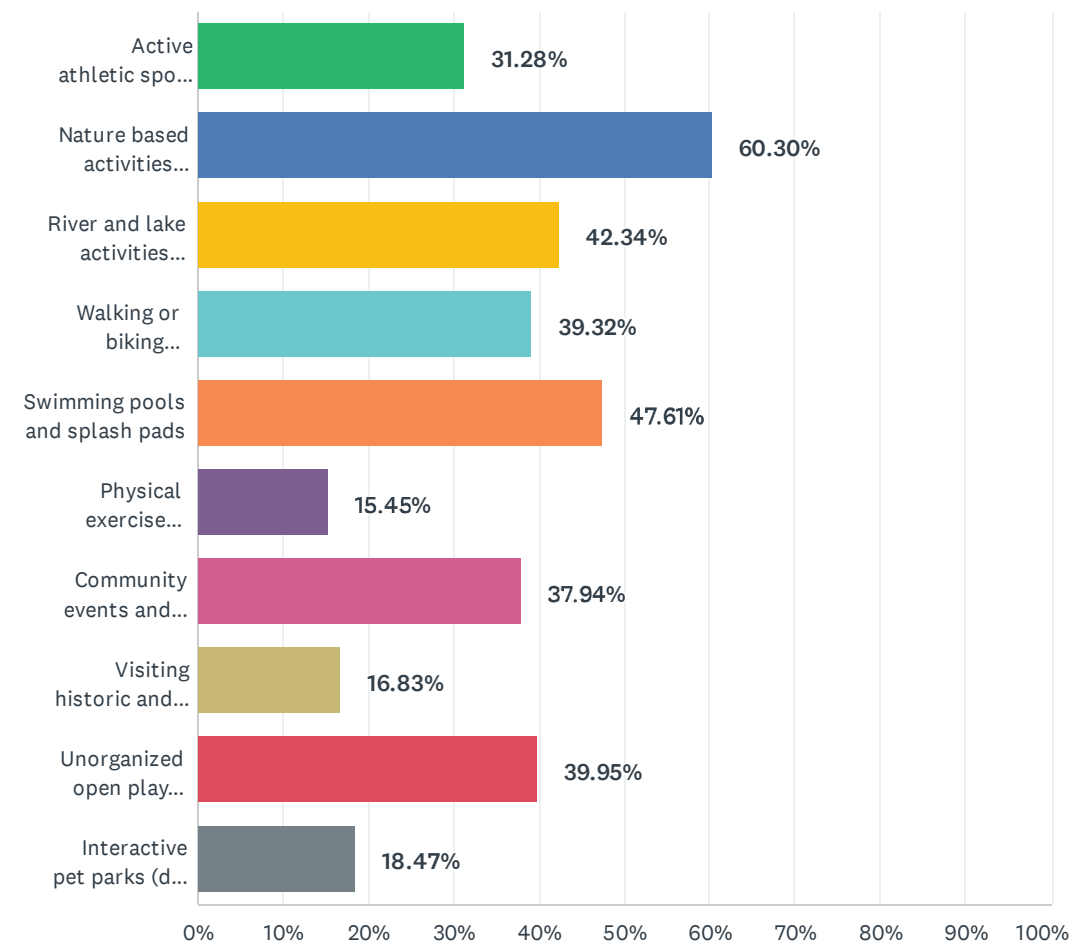
Q10 Are the park and recreational opportunities in White County affordable to you?

Answered: 795 Skipped: 2



Q11 What type of recreational experiences do you like the best (pick up to three)?

Answered: 796 Skipped: 1

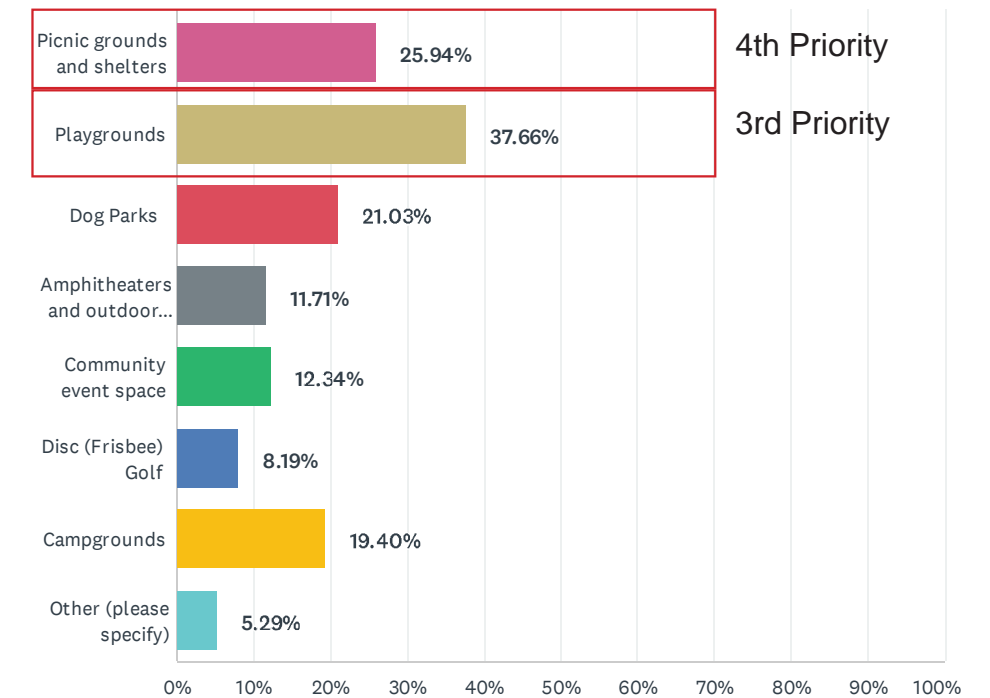
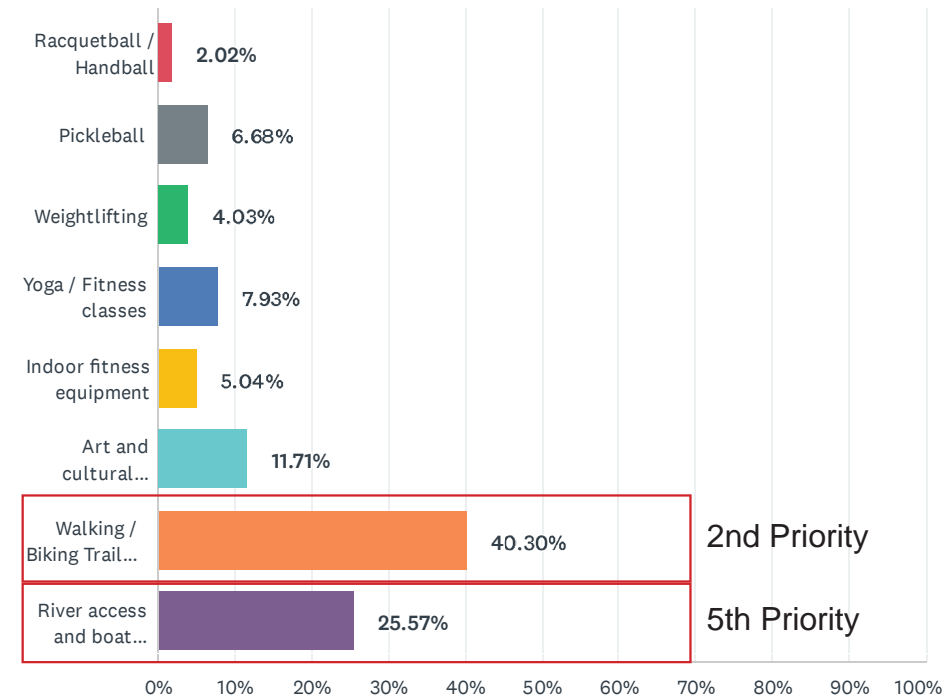
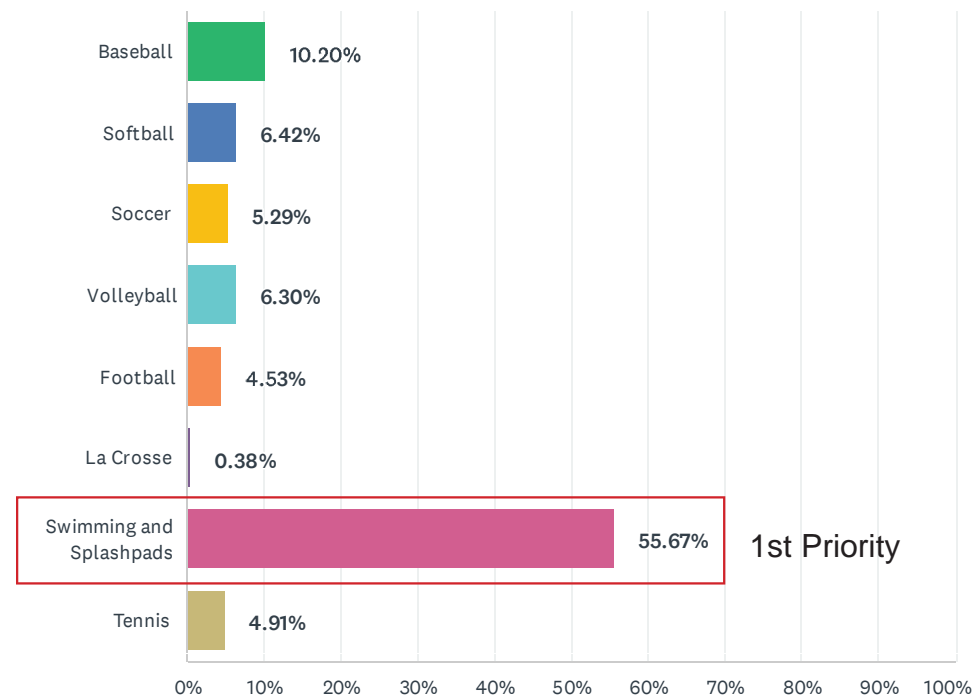




Public Input - Online Survey

Q12 If you could spend more money and increase investment in facilities or programs, where would you invest (pick up to three)?

Answered: 794 Skipped: 3

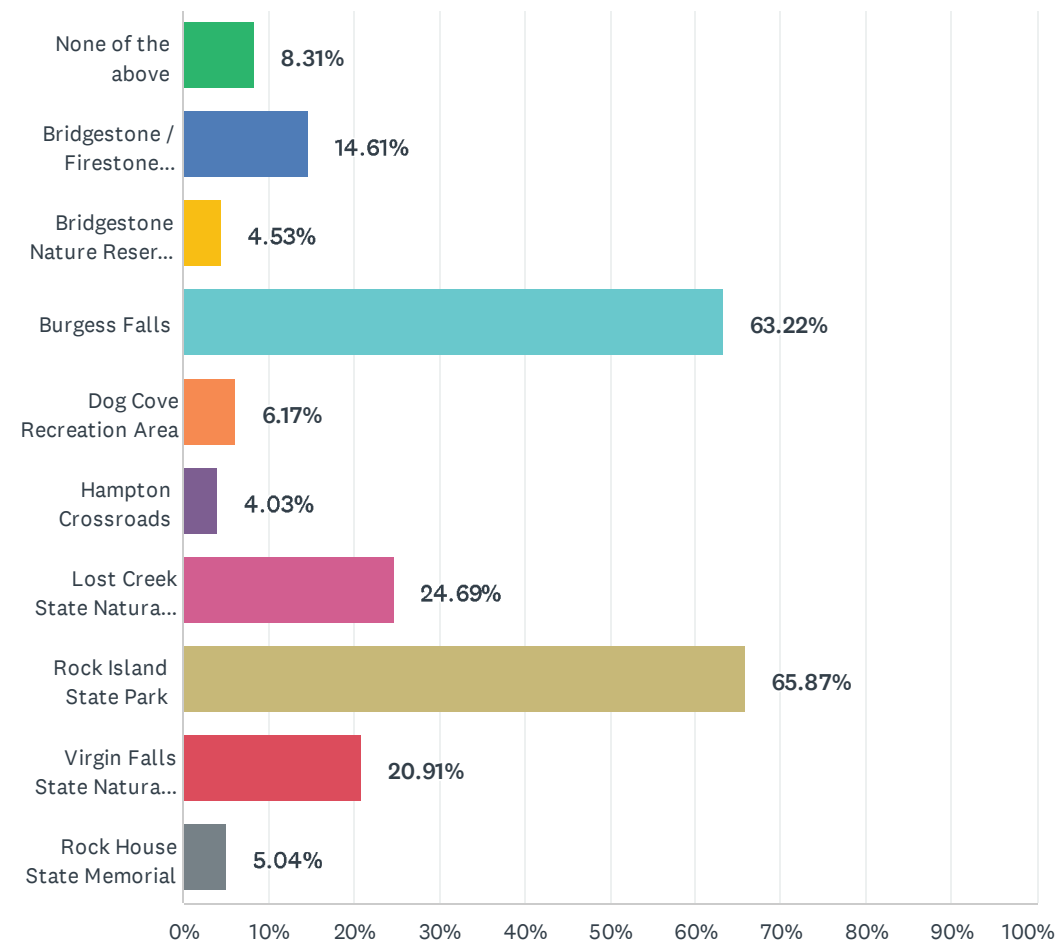




Public Input - Online Survey

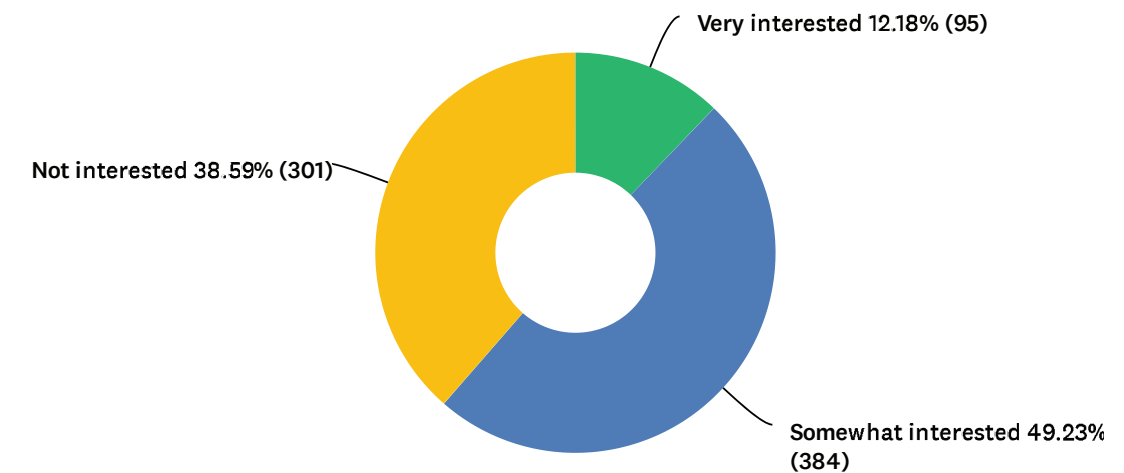
Q13 Which State Parks, Natural Areas, or Wildlife Management Areas do visit the most?

Answered: 794 Skipped: 3



Q14 How interested are you in volunteering to help with existing or future park facilities and programs?

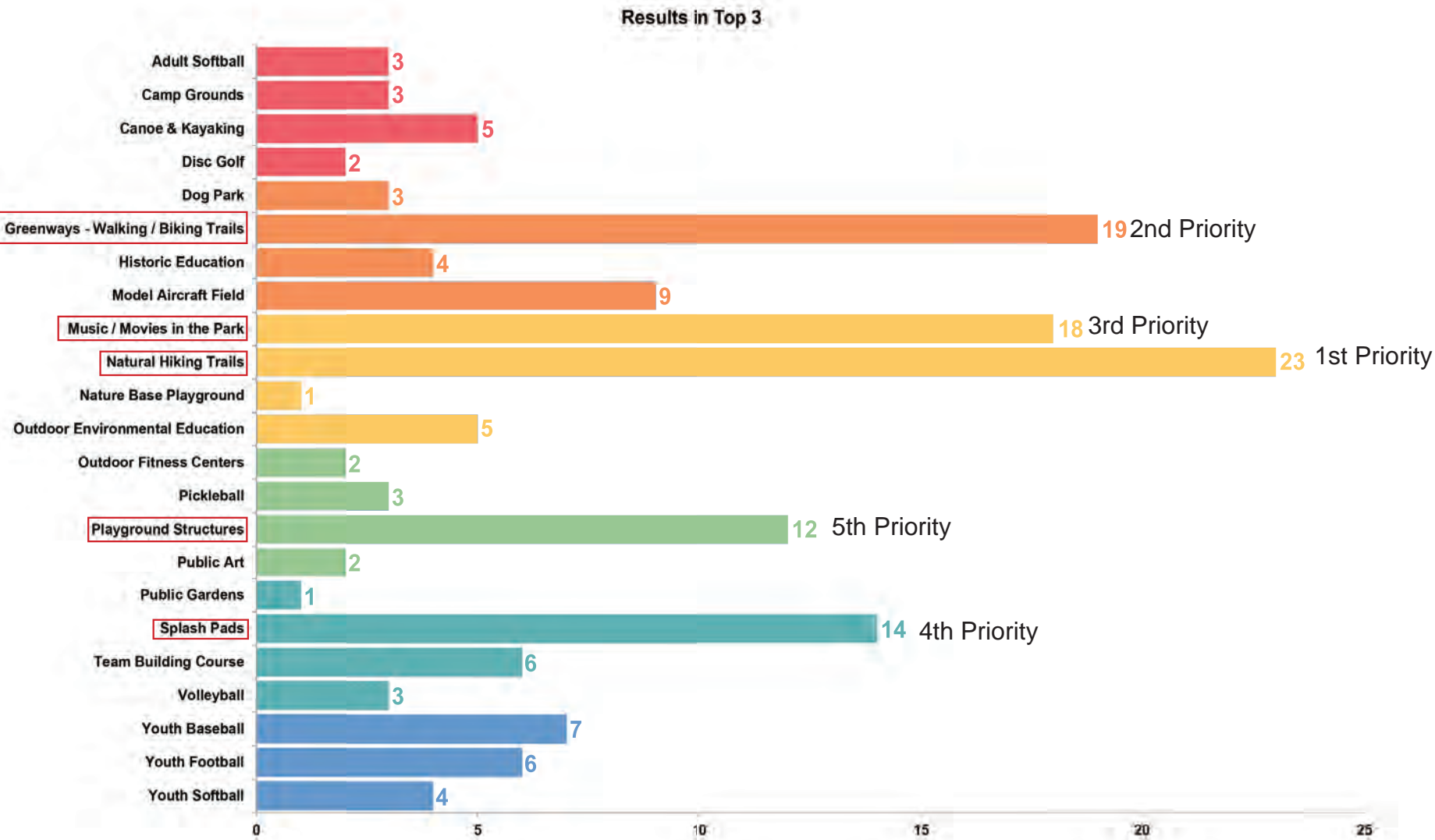
Answered: 780 Skipped: 17



Public Input Meetings - Future Park Activities

Priority Exercise - Choose Your Future Park Activity:

During the master plan public open house, input was gathered regarding preferred options for future park activities. A variety of activities, both passive and active, were presented on prioritization boards to generate thoughts on a range of activities that might fit into existing or future parks. After evaluating all the options, participants were asked to place 1st, 2nd and 3rd priority stickers on the activities they felt were the most important. The community results were tabulated into a community-wide chart. Results from the community engagement meetings and the online digital survey had consistently similar results regarding facility and program performance.



Based on a preliminary review of assets and analysis of programs and partnerships the following Opportunities and Challenges have been identified.

Opportunities:



1 Connecting to outdoor recreational opportunities in White County

The vast public lands and the Caney Fork River are major assets for White County. It is truly a unique resource to capture and enhance.



2 Catalyze Recreational Tourism by featuring White County's wealth of natural, historical, and cultural resources.

Build an inventory of recreational experiences, cultural tours, and events that will increase financial support and promote visitation to White County.



3 Opportunities to expand recreational facilities and community programming

The White County Recreation Complex and Old White County Middle School properties have excellent potential for additional field space, outdoor fitness, and passive enjoyment.



4 Continue track record of building through partnership.

Continue to build the partnership with the YMCA to provide expanded programming on county facilities. Explore similar opportunities to partner on Board of Education properties, State Natural Areas and Historic Sites.



5 Leverage strategic partnerships to expand reach.

Work with partners to identify opportunities to serve outlying communities with neighborhood parks and programs suited to the needs of local residents.



6 Continue to build a sense of Community and Volunteerism.

Bring the community into relationships with the City of Sparta, the YMCA, the Board of Education, and State Parks to accentuate strengths and build new capacity for facilities, programming, and events.

Challenges:



1 Diversify programming to highlight resources and serve all ages and abilities.

Consider partnerships to provide education and exposure to outdoor recreation skills. Solicit input on the need for seniors, after-school, or adaptive programming.



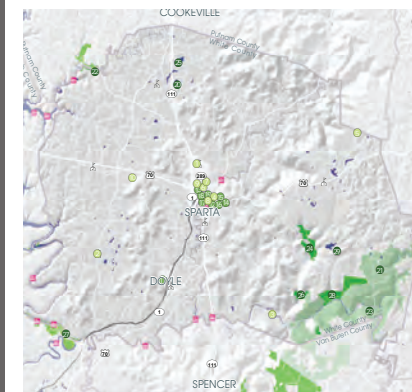
2 Aging & Outdated Facilities

Facilities need continued strategic investment and upgrading. This will be an important challenge to face as the existing facilities face more use and demand. The existing community centers are aging and present expansion opportunities.



3 Capturing interest and recreational opportunities that keep residents and visitors coming back

Connect to the strong recreational and outdoor activities provided by the unique natural & historic features of the area (hiking, biking, horseback riding)



4 Distance & Travel times to access facilities

The vast size of the county and the distance between facilities makes it harder to access for residents.



5 Identify additional funding sources to expand the County recreation budget and build capacity for capital improvements.

Revenue will need to be derived from multiple sources and require some public / private / non-profit partnerships to be sustainable.



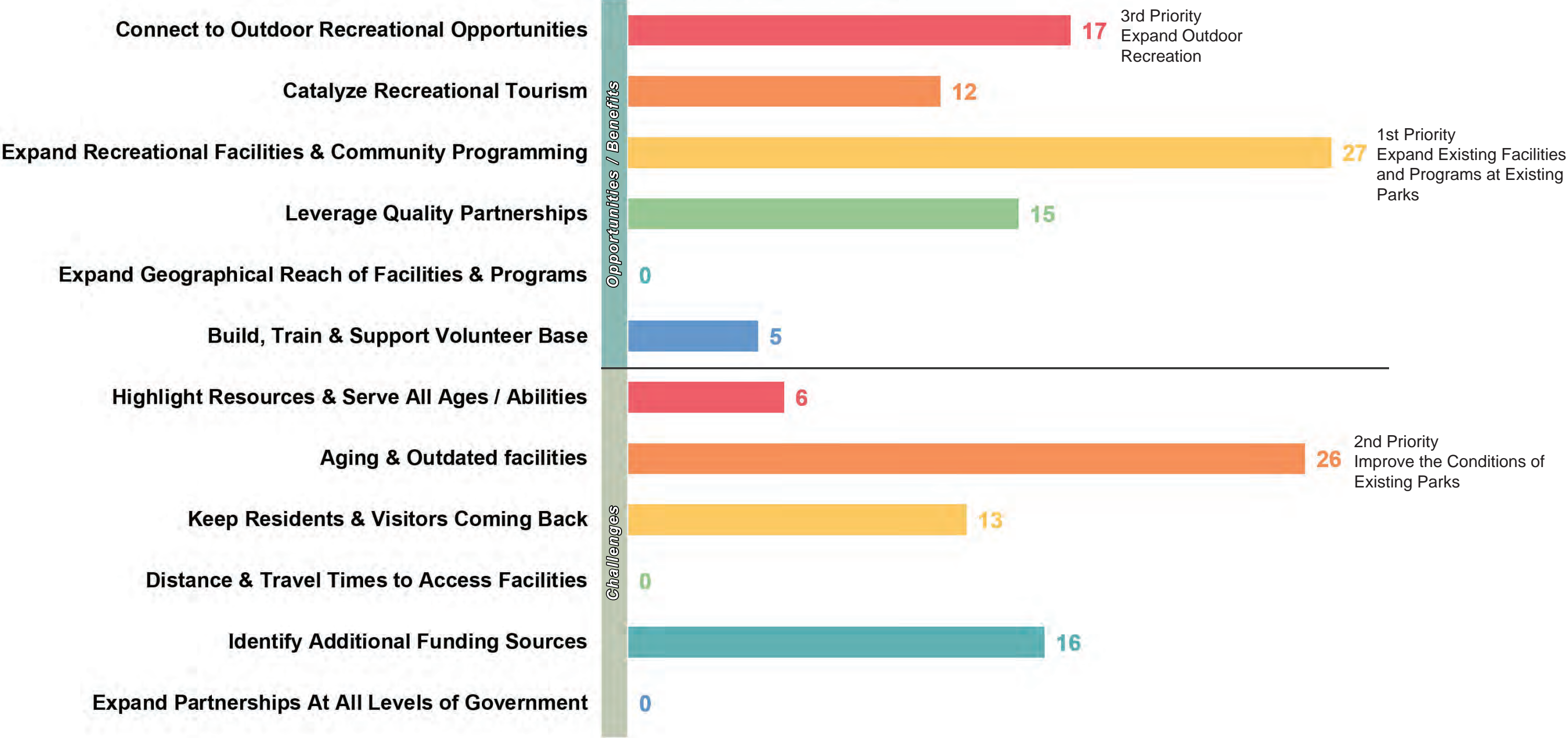
6 Foster and expand partnerships at all levels.

Improve engagement of the City of Sparta, State Parks, area non-profits, and federal partners to grow capacity for new programming, venues, events, and to meet operational challenges. It is built on the success of the YMCA and Highlands Partnership models.



Public Input - 6 Big Opportunities & 6 Big Constraints Priority Results

Opportunities & Challenges



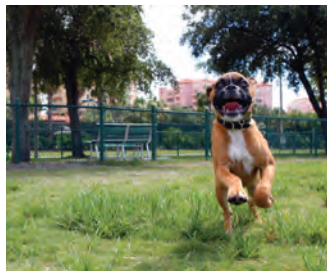
12 Big Recommendations Summary

Facilities:

1 Add more diverse facilities and programs at White County Recreation Complex.



2 Add programs to the old White County Middle School property. This site has high potential for simple, diverse facilities like dog park(s), playgrounds, walking trails, disk golf, pickleball courts, and flex athletic fields.



3 Create more playgrounds and adjoining picnic shelters within the existing park facilities.



Programs / Services:

4 Community space that creates a venue for movies in the park, music education and natural space.



5 Provide more passive/ environmental recreational experiences throughout the county to balance active recreation activities.



6 Promote a day trip experience for outdoor adventure and history through wayfinding signage, literature and social media.



Economic Needs / Opportunities:

7 Collaboration between city and county to meet operation and maintenance cost objectives with a dedicated funding source.



8 Promote fundraising events like marathons, hiking, and hiking + biking events or "rubber duck" races to generate greenway expansions and additional river access points.



9 Create interest in tournament events focused around outdoor recreational experiences like disc golf, mountail biking and kayak events.



Staff & Partnerships:

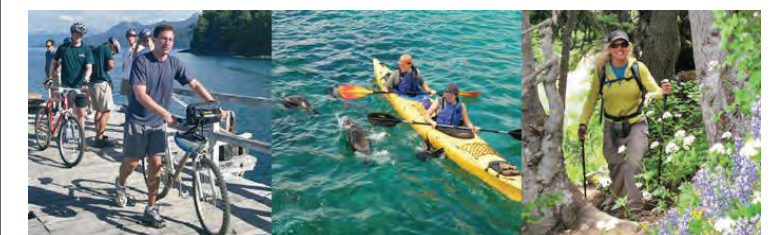
10 Work with YMCA at continued program expansion and possible splash pad development.



11 Better maintenance and safety improvements of existing facilities (in partnership between city, county and private facilities)



12 Work with state park and surrounding municipalities to promote hiking, biking and watercraft opportunities to promote local and regional outdoor recreation tourism.

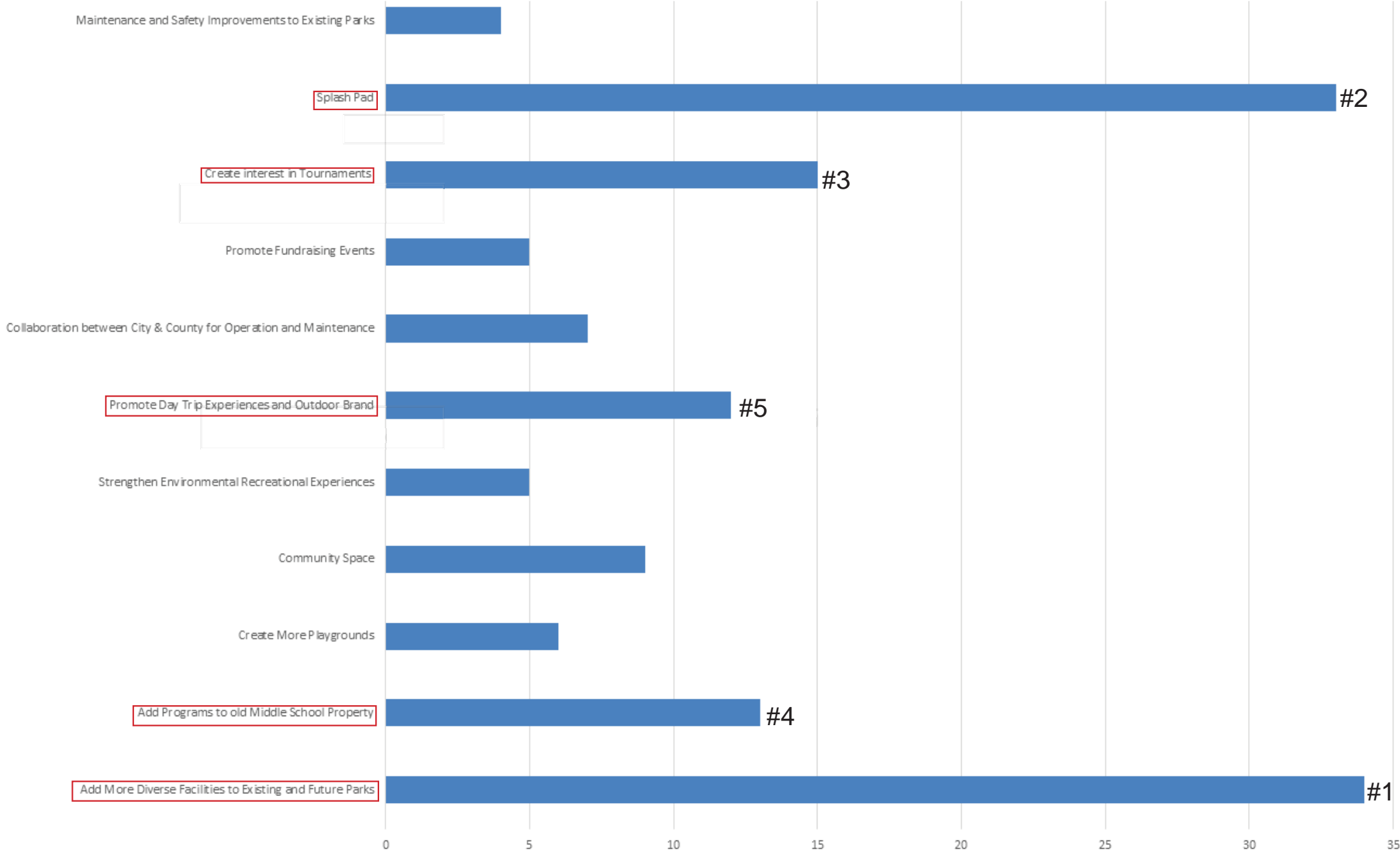




12 Big Recommendations Summary Results

The master plan recommendations were presented during a public open house. The results of this input have been summarized to help prioritize implementation and policy suggestions of this master plan.

Community Engagement Public Open House Results



- Results:**
Top Priority by overall points:
- #1 - Add more programs and facilities to the existing White County Recreation Complex.
- #2 - Develop a splash pad facility possibly at the YMCA, county park complex or old WCMS site.
- #3 - Work with state park and surrounding municipalities to promote tournaments and hiking, biking and watercraft opportunities to promote local and regional outdoor recreation tourism.



12 Big Recommendations Overview

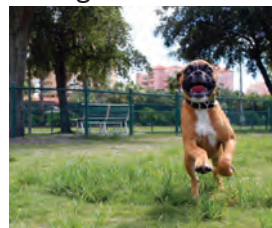
1. Create a master plan in coordination with the Army Corps of Engineers for further development of Roaring River Park and connecting the river to Downtown Gainesboro with a greenway.

Roaring River Park is a major recreational hub in the county and should be more strongly integrated into the parks and recreation network. The park should also be further developed in order to maximize it's potential as a local and regional asset. The park's proximity to Gainesboro adds to it's value by making it a potential tourist destination as well as a point of interest for the local community. The park should be redesigned to include programs that benefit White County residents, such as a dog park, splash pad, walking trails, boat launches, and other water-based recreation. A redesign of Roaring River park can also act as an economic stimuli if programming is included to draw in tourists. By connecting the downtown with Roaring River Park, all of these tourism assets become intertwined and more accessible.



2. Add programs to the old White County Middle School property. This site has high potential for simple, diverse facilities like dog park(s), playgrounds, walking trails, disk golf, pickleball courts, and flex athletic fields.

The geography of White County allows for a variety of nature-based recreation. The Cumberland river and its tributaries provide space for water recreation such as kayaking, boating, and fishing. The mountainous terrain can be utilized by climbing, hiking, or biking enthusiasts. There should be a concentrated effort to expand nature-based programs for residents and tourists, alike. Types of programs could include: guided biking and hiking tours, nature camps, bird-watching clubs, river clean-ups, and simply adding educational signage to parks and trail systems.



3. Create more playgrounds, nature-based play and adjoining picnic shelters within the existing park facilities.

White County has developed parks throughout White County that have updated play areas with new, more nature-based playgrounds and adjoining picnic shelters provide a space for families to spend time together, while the children are able to use a more creative imagination while playing.



4. Community space that creates a venue for movies in the park, music education and natural space.

White County has a strong musical culture. This area has produced several country, gospel and bluegrass musicians. The music scene in this community is strong and there is a high demand for a space for them. Roaring River Park can be utilized as a space for a small amphitheater for local musicians to host a wide range of shows and festivals. Creating a space for the music scene in the area, there is an ability to bolster more business for the local restaurants and businesses by creating a tourist attraction.



5. Provide more passive/ environmental recreational experiences throughout the county to balance active recreation activities.

Throughout the county, there is a surplus of possibilities that could help the community develop more passive experiences, such as walking trails, dog parks, etc. Creating space for these places throughout the county will encourage more people to recreate the way they so choose through various forms of recreation.



6. Promote a day trip experience for outdoor adventure and history through wayfinding signage, literature and social media.

White County has various parks spread throughout the area that would allow for enough activities to promote a regional daytrip to the area. This daytrip would include the history of the area as well as experiencing the outdoor activities the county has to offer.



12 Big Recommendations Summary Overview

7. Collaboration between city and county to meet operation and maintenance cost objectives with a dedicated funding source.

Developing a specific dedicated fund for the operation and maintenance of the parks is necessary for grant matching, expansion of future facilities and locally funded projects. At the moment, the county does not have any employees for the parks. Creating a position in the county for this would be beneficial to the future and longevity of the parks.



8. Promote fundraising events like marathons, hiking, and hiking + biking events or "rubber duck" races to generate greenway expansions and additional river access points.

Fundraising in White County to be able to fund new facilities can create an intrigue into the events as well as a loyal following for the new recreational activities that can come out of the fundraising.



9. Create interest in tournament events focused around outdoor recreational experiences like disc golf, mountain biking and kayak events.

Creating a demand for tournament style events not only creates a revenue source for the area through tourism.



10. Work with YMCA on continued program expansion and possible splash pad development.

The YMCA is a great organization in White County. Establishing the local YMCA as a community hub allows and supports the growth of the facility through grants and fundraising. With grant money, the ability to develop a splash pad is more likely.



11. Better maintenance and safety improvements of existing facilities (in partnership between city, county and private facilities)

Better maintenance to the existing facilities fosters people wanting to use the facilities more. Families in the area are more likely to go and spend time in the existing facilities.



12. Work with state park and surrounding municipalities to promote hiking, biking and watercraft opportunities to promote local and regional outdoor recreation tourism.

Creating an intrigue into the area's outdoor recreation in partnership with the state parks will develop a demand for local tourism.





Implementation & Funding Opportunities

Federal Funding Sources:

Federal funding is typically directed through state agencies to local governments either in the form of grants or direct appropriations, independent from state budgets. Federal funding typically requires a local match of 20%, although there are sometimes exceptions, such as the recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus funds, which did not require a match.

Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside

- These set-aside funds include all projects and activities that encompass a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects, such as the conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors to recreational trails for pedestrians, bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users, safe routes to school projects, community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity.
- See more at: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/

Recreational Trails Program:

- The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federal-funded, state-administered grant program. The RTP provides grant funding for land acquisition for trails, trail construction, trail maintenance, trail rehabilitation and for trail head support facilities. These funds are distributed in the form of an 80% grant with a 20% match. Local, state and federal land managing agencies are eligible to apply as well as state-chartered, non-profit organizations with IRS 501 (c)(3) status that have a written agreement for trail management with an agency. All grants must be on publicly owned land.
- See more at: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/

Partnership to Improve Community Health (PICH):

- PICH is a 3-year initiative that supports the implementation of evidence-based strategies to improve the health of communities and reduce the prevalence of chronic disease. PICH builds on a body of knowledge developed through previously funded Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) programs and encourages collaboration with a multi-sectoral coalition to implement sustainable changes in communities where people live, learn, work, and play.
- See more at: <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/partnershipstoimprovecommunityhealth/index.html>

State Funding Sources:

Local Parks & Recreation Fund (LPRF) Grants:

- The Local Parks and Recreation Fund (LPRF) provides grants to eligible local government entities for the purchase of land for parks, natural areas, greenways, and recreation facilities. The funds may also be used for trail development and capital projects in parks, natural areas, and greenways.
- See more at: <https://www.tn.gov/environment/about-tdec/grants/grants-recreation-grants/grants-local-parks-and-recreation-fund-lprf-grants.html>

Tennessee Recreation Initiative Program:

- The Tennessee Recreation Initiative Program (TRIP) provides grants to those cities and counties currently without a comprehensive parks and recreation delivery system in operation due to lack of staffing and organization.
- See more at: <https://www.tn.gov/environment/about-tdec/grants/grants-recreation-grants/grants-tennessee-recreation-initiative-program-trip-grants.html>
- Tennessee Department of Health: The TN Dept. of Health has been providing grants for communities to meet park and recreation needs with healthy built environment grants. These grants can provide funding for planning efforts as well as in-the-ground projects like playgrounds and greenways.



Implementation & Funding Opportunities

Local Funding Sources:

Local Bond Measures:

- Local bond measures, or levies, are usually general obligation bonds for specific projects. Bond measures are typically limited by time based on the debt load of the local government or the project under focus. Funding from bond measures can be used for engineering, design and construction of local park facilities.

Stormwater Utility Fees:

- Stormwater charges are typically based on an estimate of the amount of impervious surface on a user's property. Impervious surfaces (such as rooftops and paved areas) increase both the amount and rate of stormwater runoff compared to natural conditions. Such surfaces cause runoff that directly or indirectly discharges into public storm drainage facilities and creates a need for stormwater management services. Thus, users with more impervious surfaces are charged more for stormwater service than users with less impervious surfaces.
- The rates, fees, and charges collected for stormwater management services may not exceed the costs incurred to provide these services. The costs that may be recovered through the stormwater rates, fees, and charges include any costs necessary to assure that all aspects of stormwater quality and quantity are managed in accordance with federal and state laws, regulations, and rules. Open space may be purchased with stormwater fees, if the property in question is used to mitigate floodwater or filter pollutants.

Hotel & Motel Tax:

- Local governments that choose to exercise a local option of hotel & motel tax can use the tax revenues to provide funding for a wide variety of projects and activities. The development of the future park property could be funded by a portion of local sales tax revenue or from a voter approved sales tax increase. Many cities and counties use the tax for tourism development, which can include athletic facilities as well as parks and recreation facilities that will draw regional participants.

Private Funding Sources:

Corporate Donations:

- Corporate donations are often received in the form of liquid investments (i.e. cash, stock, bonds) and in the form of land. Employers recognize that creating places to bike, walk, and play sports is one way to build a community and attract a quality work force. Bicycling and outdoor recreation businesses often support local projects and programs. Municipalities typically create funds to facilitate and simplify a transaction from a corporation's donation to the given municipality. Donations are mainly received when a widely supported capital improvement program is implemented. Such donations can improve capital budgets and/or projects.

Volunteer Work & Public-Private Partnerships:

- Individual volunteers from the community can be brought together with groups of volunteers from church groups, civic groups, scout troops and environmental groups to work on park development on special community workdays. Volunteers can also be used for fundraising, maintenance, and programming needs. Local schools or community groups may use the park projects as a project for the year, possibly working with a local designer or engineer. A local construction company may donate or discount services. A challenge grant program with local businesses may be a good source of local funding, where corporations 'adopt' a park facility and help construct and maintain the facility.

Private Individual Donations:

- Private individual donations can come in the form of liquid investments (i.e. cash, stock, bonds) or land. Municipalities typically create funds to facilitate and simplify a transaction from an individual's donation to the given municipality. Donations are mainly received when a widely supported capital improvement program is implemented. Such donations can improve capital budgets and/or projects.

Fundraising / Campaign Drives:

- Organizations and individuals can participate in a fundraiser or a campaign drive. It is essential to market the purpose of a fundraiser to rally support and financial backing. Oftentimes, fundraising satisfies the need for public awareness, public education, and financial support.

Implementation Tools Summary - Facilities



1. Create a master plan for further development of the White County Recreational Complex that adds both passive and active recreational opportunities.

• 1-5 Years

- Develop a Park Master Plan that captures long term community needs and strengthens this complex as the county's "Flagship Park".
- Target grant applications for specific small to medium sized projects including potential pickle ball, dog park, picnic shelters and/or a splash pad facility.

• 5-20 Years

- Create a nature center and outdoor recreation complex that creates a regional draw.



2. Find an appropriate location for the development of a splash pad facility. This could include the YMCA site, the County Complex or the old WCMS site.

• 1-5 Years

- The community identified a splash pad facility as a top priority. An appropriate splash pad location should be identified, and appropriate funding options explored.

• 5-20 Years

- Consider designing and building a splash pad facility at one of three (3) locations:
 1. YMCA Facility - To leverage existing staff and provide for additional operation and maintenance requirements.
 2. White County Recreational Complex on Route 70 - To help generate connections to all the other park activities at the complex and provide a facility open to the entire public with nominal or no entrance fee requirements.
 3. Old White County Middle School Property - To link in close proximity to the Historic Downtown area and surrounding residential neighborhoods. This location would have ample room for parking and be very accessible.



3. Work with the city to continue expansion of greenways, trails and river connections throughout the county.

• 1-5 Years

- Work in partnership with the city of Sparta to create a greenway expansion that connects the existing greenway at South Carter St. River Park to the White County Heritage Museum, The Historic Downtown Area, and The Old White County Middle School Park Property.

• 5-20 Years

- Continue developing a major trail network at the White County Recreational Complex and connect a greenway from the complex to South Carter St. River Park.
- Utilize the Calf Killer River Corridor to develop a north/south greenway system that spans the county.

Implementation Tools Summary - Programs / Services

4. Provide more nature-based and educational programs, including hiking, biking, and paddling opportunities and increase connections to White County history and culture. This could include better branding, wayfinding and the use of a day trip app for cell phones.

•1-5 Years

- Develop a county wide map and wayfinding plan that identifies hiking, biking, and paddling opportunities. This could be enhanced into a White County Outdoor Adventure application for cell phone/digital use.

• 5-20 Years

- Make a series of outdoor adventure playgrounds connected to natural surface trails at the White County Recreational Complex to promote active outdoor play and environmental education.



5. Create volunteer and partnership programs that utilize the strong sense of community involvement to help maintain and support existing recreational facilities and programs.

•1-5 Years

- Create a county liaison to coordinate all the athletic clubs and non-profit organizations providing recreational opportunities in the county.

• 5-20 Years

- Develop a volunteer training program tailored to guide residents and visitors on outdoor adventure trips to hike, bike, and paddle throughout the county and surrounding area.



6. Develop more public space for community events, including a large festival space and possibly an outdoor amphitheater.

•1-5 Years

- Consider developing a large community flex space for festivals, movies in the park and community events at the White County Recreational Complex or Old White County Middle School Park.

• 5-20 Years

- Develop an outdoor amphitheater as part of a potential nature center complex at the White County Recreational Complex.



Implementation Tools Summary - Economic Needs / Opportunities



7. Provide for a permanent maintenance and operations fund specific to the needs of park and recreation facilities and programs and consider a formal parks manager to be designated as part of the county staff. Consider a joint county/city maintenance agreement.

•1-5 Years

- Coordinate a joint city and county contract for park maintenance to gain efficiency and funding leverage.

• 5-20 Years

- Create an official position for park and recreation director / program manager.
- Create an official position as a park and recreation maintenance and operations manager.



8. Market and Brand White County as a destination point for outdoor adventure and Cumberland River history and culture.

•1-5 Years

- Working with the Chamber of Commerce to promote outdoor adventure in White County with the branding of "more caves, waterfalls, and scenic overlooks per square mile than anywhere else in the United States"

• 5-20 Years

- Collaborate with adjacent counties / cities to promote "outdoor play on the plateau" linking regional opportunities to hike, bike and paddle with regional branding to bring visitors back for multiple and longer stays.



9. Continue to partner with the YMCA to meet recreational demands.

•1-5 Years

- Continue to leverage partnership with the YMCA as a fully staffed recreational center.

• 5-20 Years

- Utilize the YMCA to train, promote and develop a community-wide volunteer base to serve recreational needs throughout the county.



Implementation Tools Summary - Partnerships

10. Target the highest priority facilities and programs for possible grant applications with state and federal agencies like TDEC, TDOT, and the TN Department of Health.

•1-5 Years

- Target at least one grant application per year based on the adopted park and recreation master plan. Prime state grant agencies include the Tennessee Dept. of Transportation (TDOT), the Tennessee Dept. of Conservation (TDEC), the Tennessee Dept. of Health and the Tennessee Dept. of Economic and Community Development.

• 5-20 Years

- Leverage several long term funding sources that build on previous phases of park development
- Potential grant targets include (but limited to):
• Playground Development - Dept. of Health: Healthy Built Environment Grants
• Splash Pad Development - TDEC Local Parks and Recreation (LPRF) Grants
• Natural Surface Trails - TDEC Recreation Trails Program (RTP) Grants
• Park Master Planning - Dept of Economic and Community Development Three Star Grants
• Greenway and Multi-modal Trail Development - TDOT Transportation Alternative Program Grants
• Park Director Staffing Opportunities - TDEC Tennessee Recreation Initiative Program (TRIP) Grants



11. Strengthen the parks and recreation board to work in collaboration with Explore White County and the Chamber of Commerce to promote parks and recreation and beautification for residents and visitors and carry the Master Plan vision forward.

•1-5 Years

- Create a Park and Recreation Committee focused on implementing the top priorities identified in the master plan and identifying a grant writer to assist in funding pursuits

• 5-20 Years

- Work with surrounding Park Committees, the Chamber of Commerce, the School Board and City of Sparta Leadership on the Park Commission/Board



12. Strengthen collaboration between the Ravenscroft Peerless Mine, the White County Heritage Museum, and the Dog Cove Recreation Area to promote history as part of the recreation experience.

•1-5 Years

- Include these historic places on a day tour map / wayfinding signage plan.

• 5-20 Years

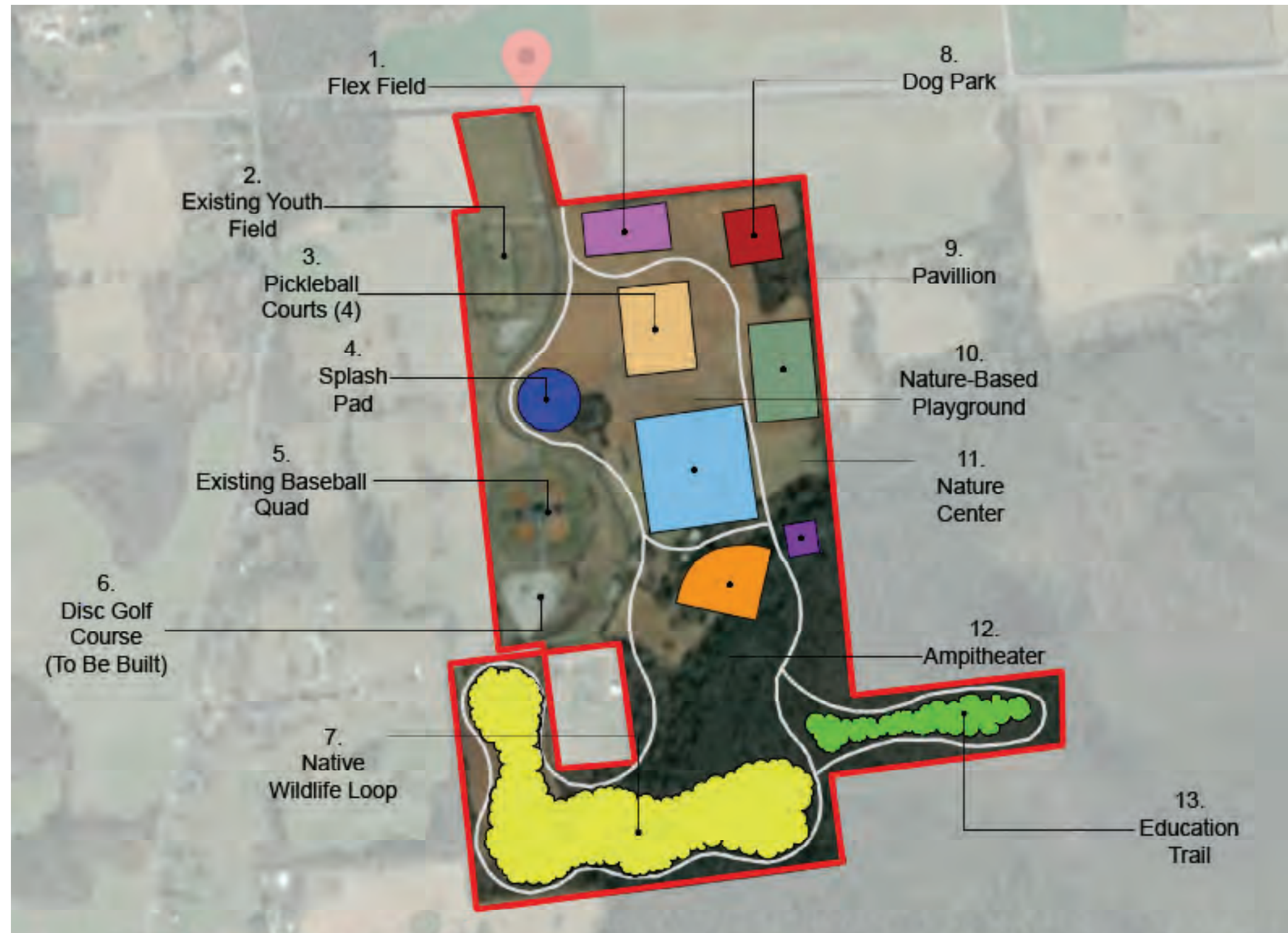
- Incorporate history into the outdoor adventure branding for the White County region.



White County Park Potential Conceptual Design

Concept Ideas

•This plan depicts a rough concept of how the White County Recreational Complex could be further developed to include a rich variety of both active and passive recreation. This will strengthen recreational activities for both residents and visitors alike. Some of these facilities can create opportunities for league and tournament play.



White County Park Precedent Images



1. Flex Field - Palmer Field, University of Michigan (Example)



4. Potential Splash Pad - Sevierville City Park, Sevierville, TN (Example)



8. Dog Park - McMinnville Dog Park, McMinnville, TN (Example)



9. Pavilion - Cason Trailhead, Murfreesboro, TN (Example)



12. Amphitheater - Volunteer Park, Seattle, WA (Example)



3. Pickleball Courts - Village of Essex Junction, Vermont (Example)



7. Native Wildlife Loop - Mill Ridge Park, Antioch, TN (Example)



10. Nature-Based Playground and Nature Center - Bentonville, AR (Example)



13. Education Trail - Storybook Trail, Ohio (Example)