

2035  
**GATEWOOD PARK**  
**MASTER PLAN – INTERIM REPORT**



## Introduction

Gatewood Park & Reservoir is nestled in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Southwest Virginia. The park stretches across more than 800 acres and is surrounded by Jefferson National Forest land. Originally built as a town water impoundment in 1960, the park offers a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities for all that visit.

Open annually March through October, the park is owned and operated by the Town of Pulaski. The property features a main office, primitive campsites accessible only by water and larger RV campsites that feature electricity, water, and sewer. In general, motorized boats are not permitted. John boats, canoes, and kayaks are available for hourly or daily rates. The park also features ample shoreline for fishing, amenities for picnicking, miles and miles of hiking trails, and maintained areas for general relaxation.

March 2015, the town began working with the New River Valley Regional Commission to facilitate the development of a 2035 Master Plan for the park. The process was led by the Gatewood Advisory Committee, comprised of frequent park users, town staff and residents, park managers, and local volunteers.

According to the United States Census Bureau, living near quality recreational facilities and parks is part of the #1 reason people move in America. Having an asset such as Gatewood Park within the community not only adds a recreational amenity, but improves public health, social construct, environment, and the local economy (NRPA 2015; APA 2002). Parks improve public health by offering the combination of a peaceful venue and active recreational amenities that can decrease the most dangerous health problems; the social construct is improved by creating a gathering area that all people can enjoy; the environmental characteristics retain habitat through the use of green infrastructure; and the local economy benefits from attracting and retaining people to live in the area, providing jobs, bolstering tourism, and increasing property values.

The purpose of developing the Master Plan was three-fold: 1) identify the existing characteristics of the property; 2) develop conceptual ideas to improve or preserve existing conditions; and 3) create strategies for future development opportunities. Beginning in August 2015, the Gatewood Advisory Committee met monthly to collaboratively develop a 2035 vision, establish planning areas, and create a plan of work that identified short-term and long-term strategies for the park.

Vision statements are intended to be aspirational and not entirely attainable; however, should guide and inspire future work. Each of the strategies in the plan of work are directly linked to the overall vision developed by the Gatewood Advisory Committee, in November 2015. The 2035 Gatewood Park vision statement is:

**In 2035 Gatewood Park is a family oriented destination that offers a wide range of recreational activities and unique opportunities to experience wildlife in a pristine wilderness environment.**

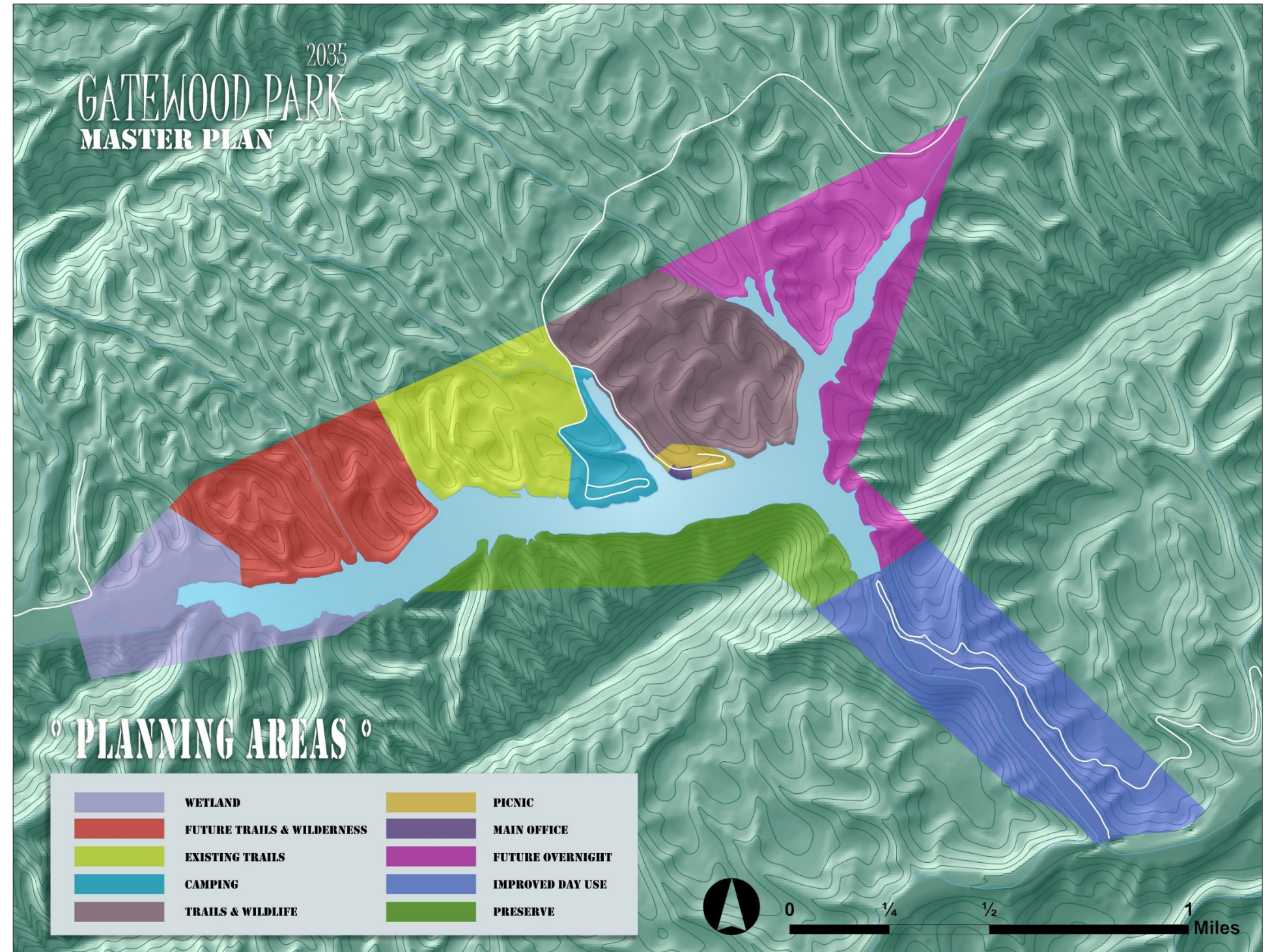
## Key Strategies

Prior to developing specific strategies for the park, the Committee established ten unique planning areas. Each area is geographically defined by existing property features and/or boundaries. Individual planning areas represent a general space that may have common challenges and opportunities.

November 2015, the Advisory Committee identified the following key strategies to be completed over the next 3-5 years:

- 1. Connect the Camping Area to the Main Office Area.** Although the areas are no more than 300 feet apart, visitors must currently back-track nearly 1-mile between the two. Short-term: ferry; long-term: bridge. Funding for permits, engineering, construction, and maintenance is needed.
- 2. Complete a feasibility study to determine the installation of a swimming pool or beach area.** Survey feedback indicated a strong interest in creating swimming opportunities at the park. Short-term: complete a study to identify construction costs, market potential, and maintenance needs. Funding for the study is needed.
- 3. Construct handicapped accessible picnic areas and shelters – on or as close to the water as possible.** The Advisory Committee identified the growing demand for handicapped accessible areas in the park. A shelter could also be a revenue source through rental fees. Short-term: build a new picnic shelter on or as close to the water as possible. Funding for the construction is needed.

Additional key strategies include: designing and constructing a new and/or expanded trail network; establishing a check-in station at the Camping Area/Office Area roadway intersection; installing a drinking water filtration system to serve the Camping and Main Office Areas; and completing a feasibility study to determine the installation of new rental properties in the Future Overnight and Trails & Wildlife areas.





## Public Input

In order to obtain public input in the planning process, a survey was conducted of park users, and a public open house was held.

### **SURVEY**

The user survey included 10 questions, and could be answered online or by hard copy. For an example of the hard copy, please see Appendix A. The survey was administered between August and October, 2015. 135 persons completed the online survey, and 19 provided their responses in writing. The following is a summary of the survey results. For the full results, please see Appendix B.

#### Where are people from?

Most people answered that they were from a Pulaski zip-code (53%), which includes both the Town of Pulaski and the County. The Town of Dublin was second (15%), followed by Radford City (10%), Montgomery County (9%), Giles County (3%), Wythe (3%), and others (7%). The map on this page (shown lower right) illustrates survey respondents' zip-codes.

#### Attendance

95% of respondents said they have visited the park, with the majority of these visiting in the later summer and early fall. Most respondents said that they usually visit the park for extended stays (multiple days to more than one day per week).

#### Current Amenities

78% of respondents said that they enjoy relaxation and peacefulness most at the park, followed by 64% who said they enjoyed fishing.

51% of respondents said that current amenities should be improved, while the remainder indicated that things should remain the same.

The top five improvements that respondents requested include: 1) improve trails, 2) improve the picnic areas, 3) improve the bathrooms, 4) get rid of the geese, and 5) develop swimming areas.

Most people said they would visit the park more often if more amenities were built.

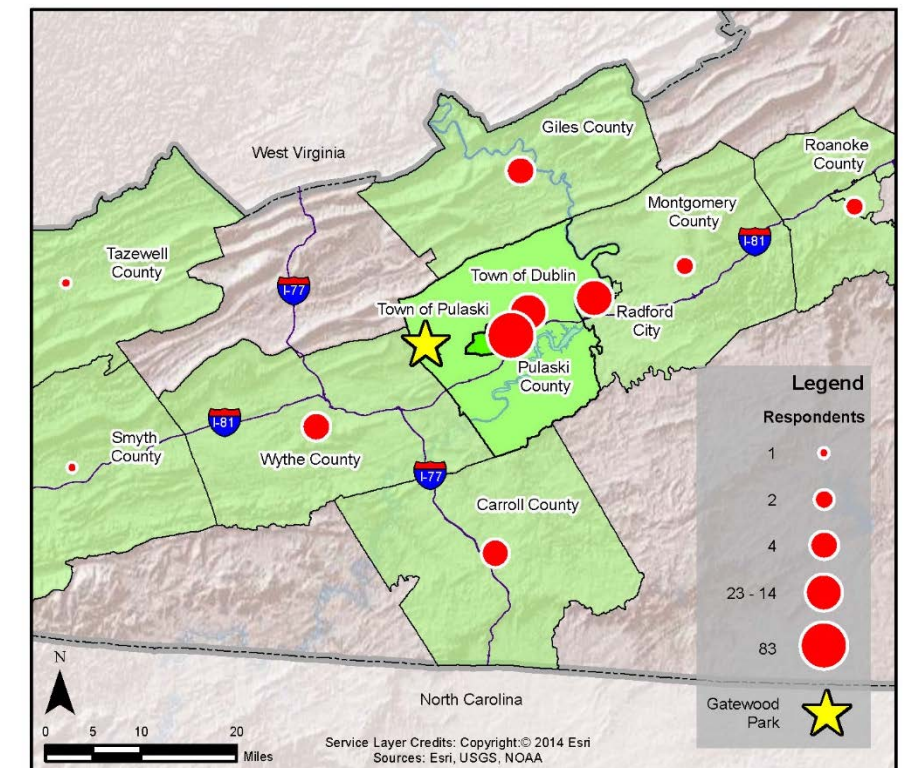
#### Future Amenities

When asked about possible future amenities, the top five identified by respondents were: a beach or swimming in the lake, cabins, an expanded store, swimming pool, and zip lines.

When asked to prioritize future amenities, survey respondents ranked the options as follows: 1) a beach or swimming areas; 2) cabins, 3) a swimming pool, 4) zip lines, and 5) expanding the store. When asked how much people would pay for these amenities, most said they would pay less than \$20 a day for the beach/ swimming area, swimming pool, zip lines, and an expanded general store, and more than \$50 a day for cabins.

#### **OPEN HOUSE**

A public open house was held in December 2015, at the Pulaski Historic Train Station to also gather public input on proposed recommendations for the park. Posters were presented to the public, questions were answered, and comments were gathered. For a list of the public attendees, please see Appendix C.

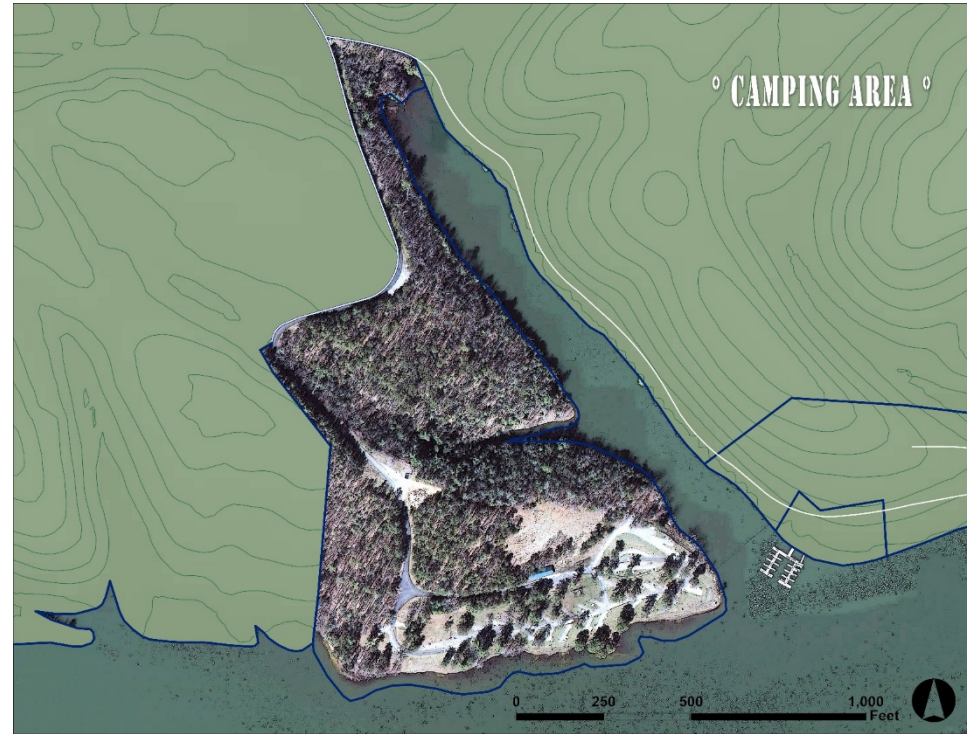


## Plan of Work

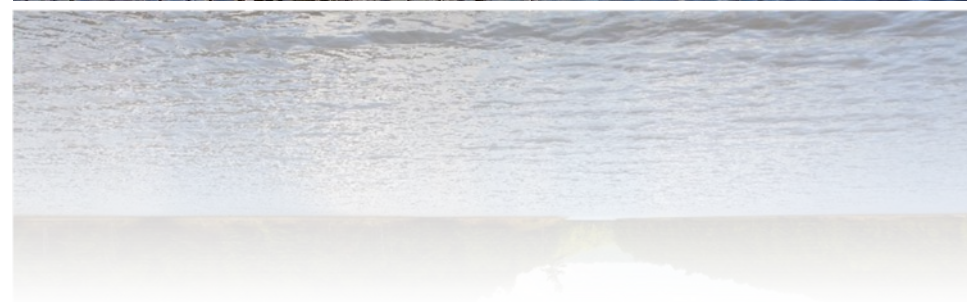
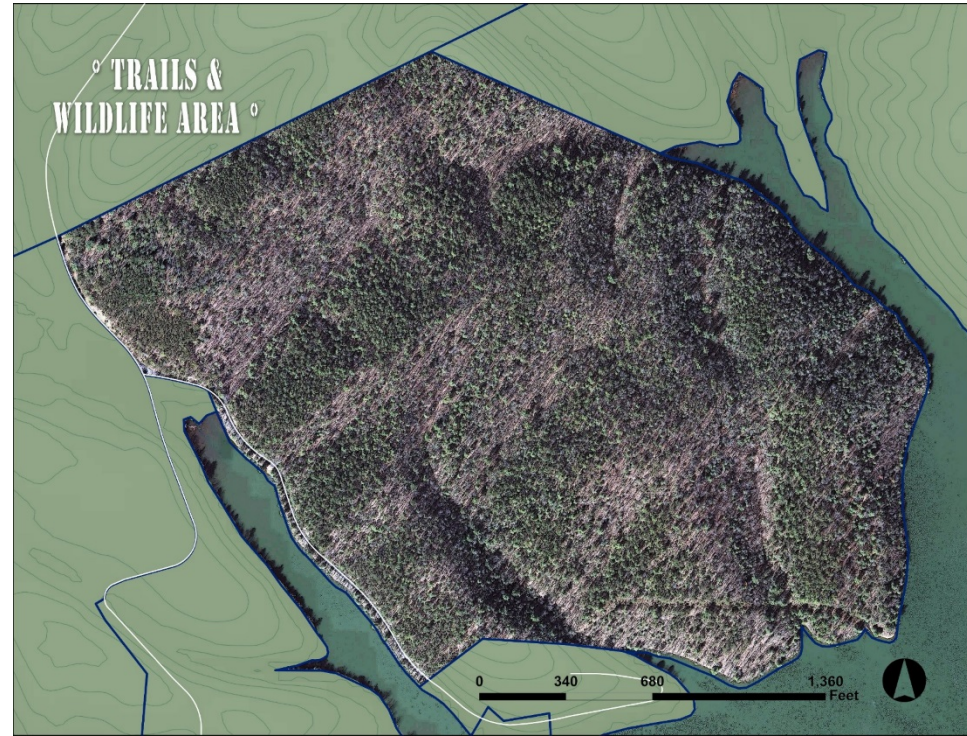
This section identifies strategies for each planning area, what kind of funding, facilities, expertise is needed to carry out the action; who will take the lead or provide key support; how you will know when the action is complete; and timeline/progress.



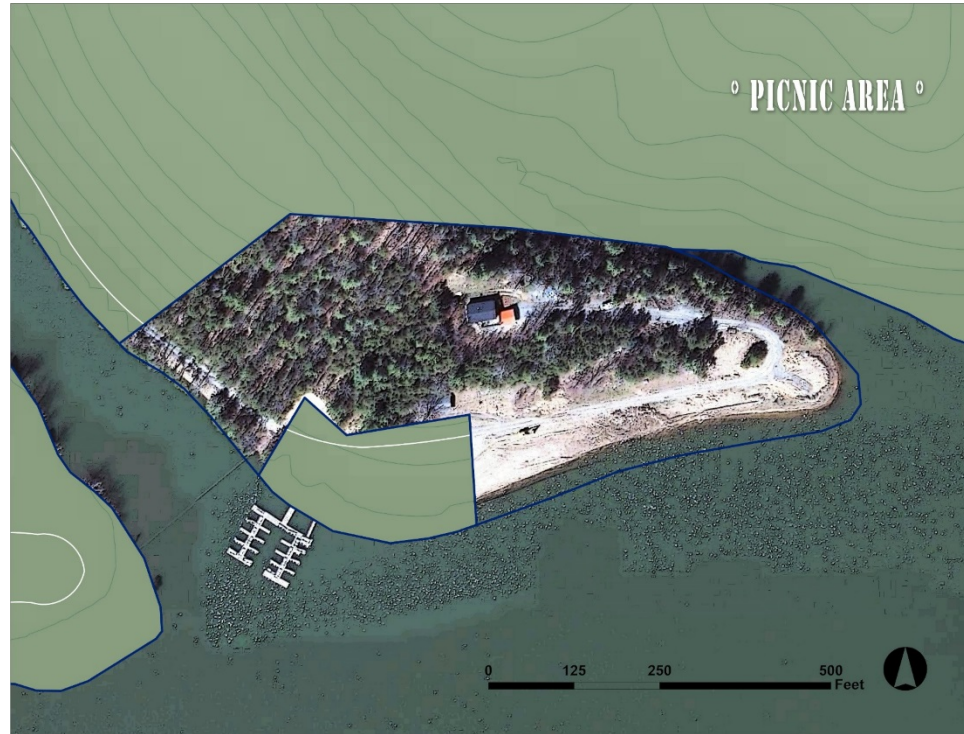
Strategies/Action	Resources Needed	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Evaluation	Progress Report
<b>FUTURE TRAILS &amp; WILDERNESS AREA</b>					
Design new/expanded network of trails	- Plan for trails	Town, community orgs, local volunteers	Short-term	Town Council approved plan.	In Planning
Construct trails	- Volunteers for trail construction - Funding for supporting infrastructure	Town, community orgs, local volunteers	Short-term	Trails constructed	Underway
GPS/map constructed trail network and produce maps	- Funding for mapping - Staff to GPS constructed network	Town, consultant	Long-term	Produce maps and brochures	In Planning
Install trail signage	- Funding for materials, production, and maintenance - Staff to assemble and install signs	Town, community orgs, local volunteers	Short-term	Trail kiosk and wayfinding signs are installed	In Planning
<b>EXISTING TRAIL AREA</b>					
Install/improve trail signage	- Funding for materials, production, and maintenance - Town or volunteers to assemble and install signs	Town, community orgs, local volunteers	Short-term	Trail kiosk and wayfinding signs are installed	Underway
Develop a new park website	- Funding for website development - Trail data and park info/content	Town, NRVRC	Short-term	New website and brochure features trail information	Underway
Construct a handicapped accessible shelter near amphitheater	- Funding for park theme/standard design of shelter - Funding for materials, and contractor(s)	Town	Short-term	New shelter constructed	In Planning
Complete a feasibility study for the installation of long-term and/or permanent RV/trailer site	- Funding for feasibility study, permits, engineering, construction, maintenance, management, potential revenue, and business plan	Town, consultant	Short-term	Feasibility study complete	In Planning
Construct long-term and/or permanent RV trailer site	- Facility to address sewage, electricity, and maintenance - Funding for engineer, construction crew, and maintenance	Town, contractor	Long-term	Permanent sites are installed	In Planning
Construct a boat dock for alternative access to area	- Funding for engineering, permits, construction, maintenance, management - Maintenance plan	Town, contractor	Short-term	Dock is constructed	In Planning



Strategies/Action	Resources Needed	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Evaluation	Progress Report
<b>CAMPING AREA</b>					
Construct a contact/check-in station	- Funding for engineering, construction, maintenance, utilities, staffing, and management - Staff facilities (parking/restrooms) - Maintenance plan	Town, consultant, contractor	Short-term	Station is built	In Planning
Build a new picnic area that features a shelter on or close to the water	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction, maintenance, utilities, and management - Handicapped accessible parking and facilities	Town, contractor	Long-term	Shelter is built	In Planning
Connect Camping Area to Main Office Area (store)	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction, and maintenance - Maintenance plan	Town, consultant	Short-term (ferry) Long-term (bridge)	Connection is made	In Planning
Install a drinking water filtration system	- Training, engineering review, and certification	Town	Short-term	Filtration system is installed and operational	In Planning
Complete a feasibility study for swimming	- Funding to complete a study to determine the installation of a new swimming pool or beach area	Town, consultant	Short-term	Feasibility study complete	Underway
Create a swimming facility/area	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction, staff and maintenance	Town, consultant, contractor	Short-term	Swimming opportunities available	Underway
Develop a wildlife management plan	- Funding to complete a plan for invasive wildlife	Town, consultant	Short-term	Plan complete	In Planning
Handicapped accessible fishing area	- Funding to construct path and platform	Town, contractor	Short-term	Construction complete	In Planning
Handicapped accessible campsites	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction, staff and maintenance	Town, consultant, contractor	Short-term	Construction complete	In Planning

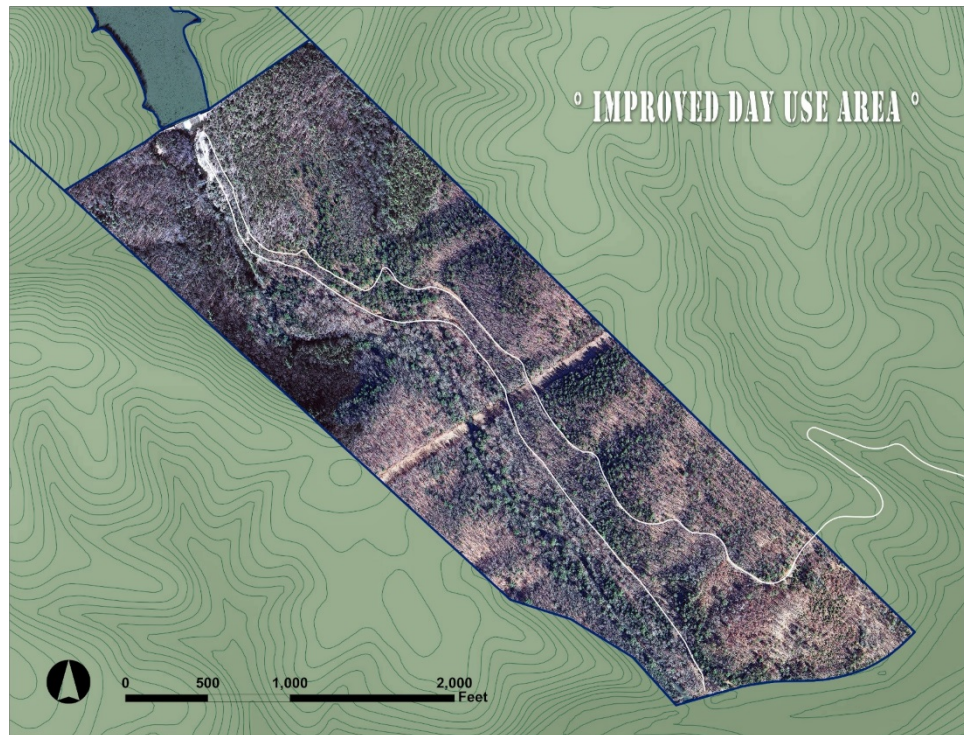
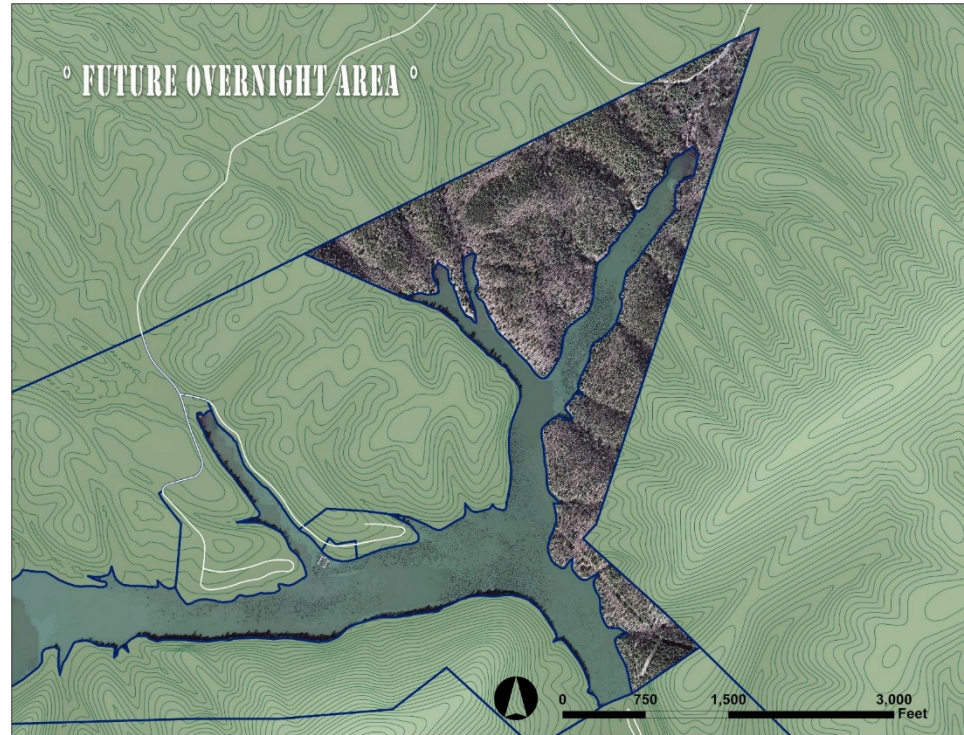


Strategies/Action	Resources Needed	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Evaluation	Progress Report
<b>TRAILS &amp; WILDLIFE AREA</b>					
Install trail wayfinding signage and/or trail blazes	- Funding for materials, production, and maintenance - Town or volunteers to assemble and install signs	Town, community orgs, local volunteers	Short-term	Trail kiosk and wayfinding signs are installed	Underway
Design new/expanded network of trails	- Plan for trails	Town, community organizations, local volunteers	Short-term	Town Council approved plan.	In Planning
Construct trails	- Volunteers for trail construction - Funding for supporting infrastructure	Town, community organizations, local volunteers	Long-term	Trails constructed	Underway
Complete a feasibility study for cabins	- Funding to complete a study to determine the installation of cabin rental properties. - Business & maintenance plan	Town, consultant	Short-term	Study complete, locations identified	In Planning
Construct cabins that offer a view of the reservoir	- Funding for park theme/standard design of cabin(s) - Funding for permits, engineering, utilities, construction, access, maintenance, staff and management	Town, consultant, contractor	Long-term	Cabin(s) are ready for rental/lease	In Planning
Develop a new park website and promotional materials	- Funding for website development - Cabin(s) description and online reservation capabilities	Town, consultant	Long-term	Website live	In Planning
Negotiate property swap with National Forest	- Acquire property to extend Trails & Wildlife Planning Area to roadway	Town, National Forest Service	Short-term	Property owned	In Planning



Strategies/Action	Resources Needed	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Evaluation	Progress Report
<b>PICNIC AREA</b>					
Build a new picnic area that features a shelter(s)	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction, maintenance, utilities, and management - ADA accessible parking and facilities	Town	Short-term	Shelter is built	In Planning
Complete a feasibility study for swimming	- Funding to complete a study to determine the installation of a new swimming pool or beach area	Town, consultant	Short-term	Feasibility study complete	In Planning
Create a swimming facility/area	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction, staff and maintenance	Town, consultant, contractor	Long-term	Swimming available	In Planning
Provide a new snack bar/grill	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction or renovation, utilities, equipment, staff and maintenance	Town, Private Business Owner	Short-term	Food available for purchase at the park	In Planning
Create a new dog park	- Funding for fence, trash receptacle stations, seating, staff and maintenance	Town	Short-term	Park open	Underway
New office and assistant manager quarters	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction or renovation, utilities, equipment, staff and maintenance	Town	Long-term	New buildings erected	Underway
New parking area	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction or renovation, utilities, equipment, staff and maintenance	Town	Long-term	New parking area(s) available	In Planning
<b>MAIN OFFICE AREA</b>					
Connect Camping Area to Main Office Area (store)	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction, and maintenance; maintenance plan	Town, consultant	Short-term (ferry); Long-term (bridge)	Connection is made	In Planning
Expand Store to include more amenities/products	- Business plan; - Funding for expansion and supplies (camp products, shirts, post cards, etc.)	Town	Short-term	Additional products are available for purchase	In Planning
Provide a new snack bar/grill	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction or renovation, utilities, equipment, staff and maintenance	Town, Private Business Owner	Short-term	Food available for purchase	In Planning
Install a drinking water filtration system	- Funding for equipment, permits, monitoring, and maintenance	Town	Short-term	System is installed and operational	In Planning
Plumbing for existing Main Office	- Funding for permits, construction or renovation, and maintenance	Town	Short-term	Water available in building	In Planning

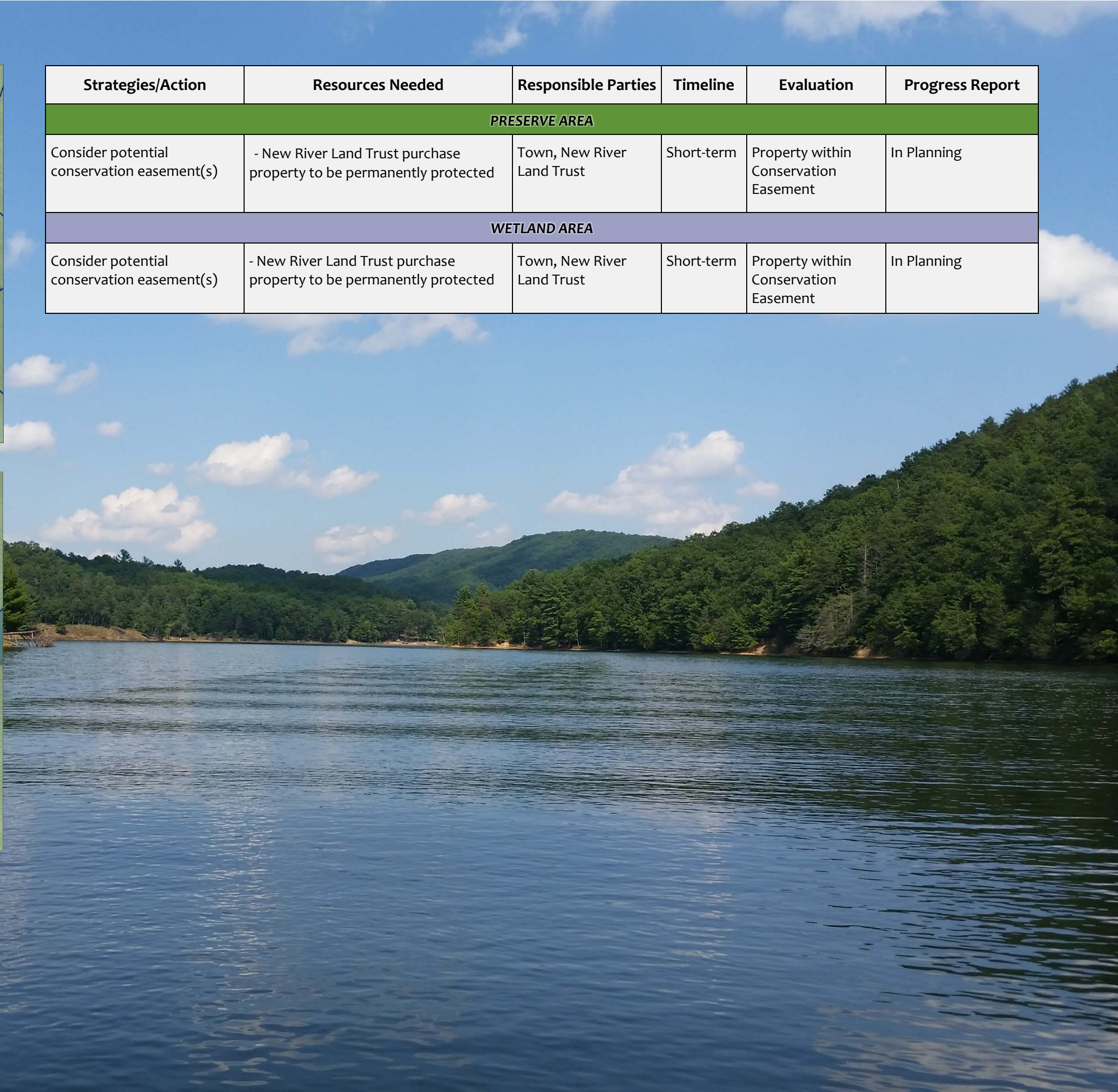




Strategies/Action	Resources Needed	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Evaluation	Progress Report
<b>FUTURE OVERNIGHT AREA</b>					
Complete a feasibility study for cabins	- Funding to complete a study to determine the installation of cabin rental properties. - Business & maintenance plan	Town, consultant	Short-term	Study complete, locations identified	In Planning
Construct cabins that offer a view of the reservoir	- Funding for park theme/standard design of cabin(s) - Funding for permits, engineering, utilities, construction, access, maintenance, staff and management	Town, consultant, contractor	Long-term	Cabin(s) are ready for rental/lease	In Planning
Develop a new park website and promotional materials	- Funding for website development - Cabin(s) description and online reservation capabilities	Town, consultant	Long-term	Website live	In Planning
Negotiate property swap with National Forest	- Acquire property to extend Future Overnight Planning Area to roadway	Town, National Forest Service	Short-term	Property owned	In Planning
<b>IMPROVED DAY-USE AREA</b>					
Preserve property located on the west side of Peak Creek from development	- Park Master Plan	Town, NRVRC	Short-term	Documented in Park Master Plan	Underway
Improve road for day use access	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction, maintenance, and management	Town, consultant	Long-term	Widened roadway constructed	In Planning
Consider potential conservation easement west of Peak Creek	- New River Land Trust purchase property to be permanently protected	Town, New River Land Trust	Short-term	Property within Conservation Easement	In Planning
Construct a trail along Peak Creek, connecting the park to downtown Pulaski	- Funding for permits, engineering, construction, maintenance, and management.	Town, Friends of Peak Creek	Long-term	Trail constructed	In Planning



Strategies/Action	Resources Needed	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Evaluation	Progress Report
<b>PRESERVE AREA</b>					
Consider potential conservation easement(s)	- New River Land Trust purchase property to be permanently protected	Town, New River Land Trust	Short-term	Property within Conservation Easement	In Planning
<b>WETLAND AREA</b>					
Consider potential conservation easement(s)	- New River Land Trust purchase property to be permanently protected	Town, New River Land Trust	Short-term	Property within Conservation Easement	In Planning





## Next Steps

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- Gatewood Park is an outdoor family destination.
  - According to the survey, 53% of respondents lived either in the Town of Pulaski or in Pulaski County. This means that nearly half of the survey respondents do not live in the Pulaski area. Based on existing fees, is the Town able to recoup actual costs for providing services to visitors from outside of town? The town might also explore pricing lots based on desirability, lots closer to the water could be priced higher.
  - The survey indicated that most users visit the park for longer than one week each year. Currently rentals are offered on a first-come first-serve basis. Would creating the ability to make online reservations increase the total of extended stay users? The park is also in need of a reliable phone/internet service.
  - Top five amenities survey respondents would like to see added to the park include: 1) developing a beach/swimming area, 2) creating a beach/swimming area, 3) installing a swimming pool, 4) adding zip-lines, and 5) expanding the park store. The majority of survey respondents said that they would be willing to visit the park more often if these amenities were available. The town could complete feasibility studies to determine initial costs, potential revenue, and long-term maintenance.
  - After reviewing survey feedback, the Gatewood Advisory Committee identified the following top three strategies: 1) connecting the camping area to the main office; 2) completing a feasibility study to determine the installation of a swimming pool or beach area; and 3) constructing a handicapped accessible picnic area/shelter, either on or as close to the water as possible. The New River Valley Regional Commission could assist with the development of conceptual plans and cost estimates for these strategies.
  - Over the last several years, the geese population has significantly increased. A wildlife management plan could identify mitigation strategies to reduce the interaction with park guests.
  - The park entrance roadway has recently become a destination for local cyclists. An expanded parking area near the main entrance may be required in the future to accommodate cyclists who ride out to the camping/office areas and back.
- Gatewood Park is an important regional asset.
  - According to the 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan, the New River Valley region currently offers 583 acres of state park land. Based on the Virginia State Parks Planning Standards and Status, there is a potential need to add 1,233 acres based on park usage, population trends and densities, and outdoor recreational facility demands in the New River Valley region. The Virginia Outdoors Plan currently suggests a standard of 10 acres per 1,000 population.
  - The Park is located within 50 miles of a total population of 629,298 and 259,015 households. The average household spending on recreation expenses in 2015 was \$18.03 or a total of \$4,670,040.45. Additionally, households spent an average of \$7.46 (\$1,932,251.90) on boats without a motor and boat trailers; \$9.27 (\$2,401,069.05) on camping equipment; and \$82.64 (\$21,404,999.60) on motorized recreational vehicles. Households spent even more on bicycles, hunting and fishing equipment, and photographic equipment. All expenditures are captured within an hour to an hour and a half drive time.



Survey location \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction:** The Town of Pulaski is developing a Master Plan for Gatewood Park, with a planning horizon of 2035. An integral component of the planning process is to identify existing conditions and to evaluate future opportunities. The process is led by the Gatewood Park Advisory Committee, which is comprised of recreational managers, local citizens, and Town Staff. The Committee invites you to contribute your ideas by completing this survey. Surveys can be returned to the main park office or mailed to 6580 Valley Center Drive, Suite 124, Radford, VA 24141. Additionally, the survey is also available online (scan the QR code located on the front and back of this survey). Thank you for your input!

What is your home zip code? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever visited Gatewood Park?  Yes  No

If no, why not? (Skip to second page of survey)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, how often do you visit?

Less than once per year  Annually  Multiple days, but less than 1 week  More than 1 week each year

What month(s) do you enjoy visiting the most? (check all that apply)

April  May  June  July  
 August  September  October  No preference

What do you enjoy the most about Gatewood Park? (check all that apply)

RV Camping  Tent Camping  Primitive camp sites  
 Pic-nicking  Fishing  Hiking  
 Relaxation/peacefulness  Photography  Other:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do any of the amenities you selected or described above need to be improved? If so, please describe below.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which of these new amenities would you enjoy? (check all that apply)

- Beach/swimming in lake
- Zip-lines
- Expanded store
- Improved signs for traffic
- Swimming pool
- Rock climbing
- Cabins
- Improved signs for trails
- Primitive campsites
- Enhanced playground(s)
- Restaurant
- Enhanced access between campsites and the main office

Other? Please describe below.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Would adding any of the amenities you selected encourage you to visit the park more often?

Yes  
 No

Of the amenities you selected, please rank your top 5 below. Additionally, how much would you be willing to pay on a daily basis for this new amenity? (check the price range)

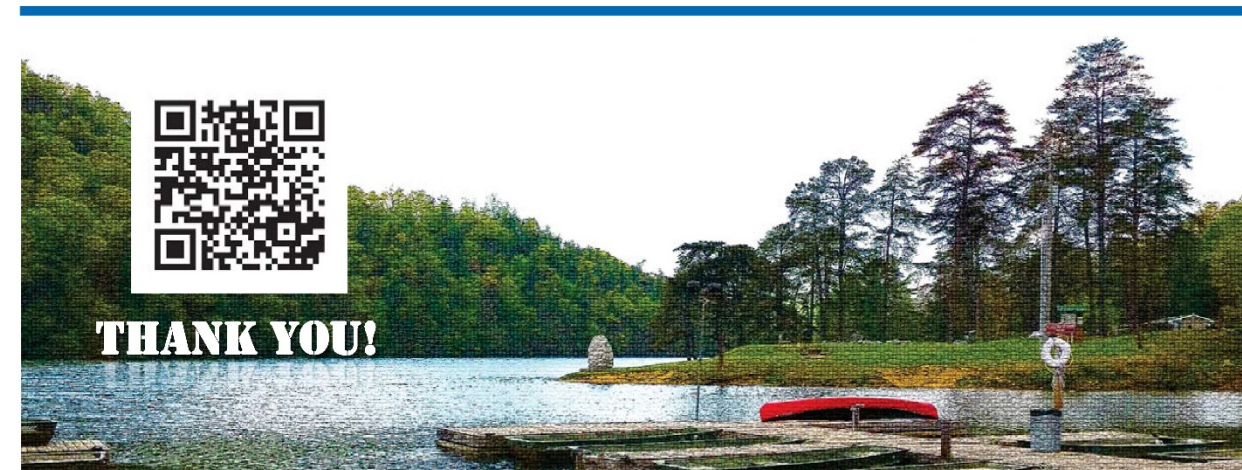
New Feature	Less than \$20	\$20 - \$35	\$30 - \$50	More than \$50
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?

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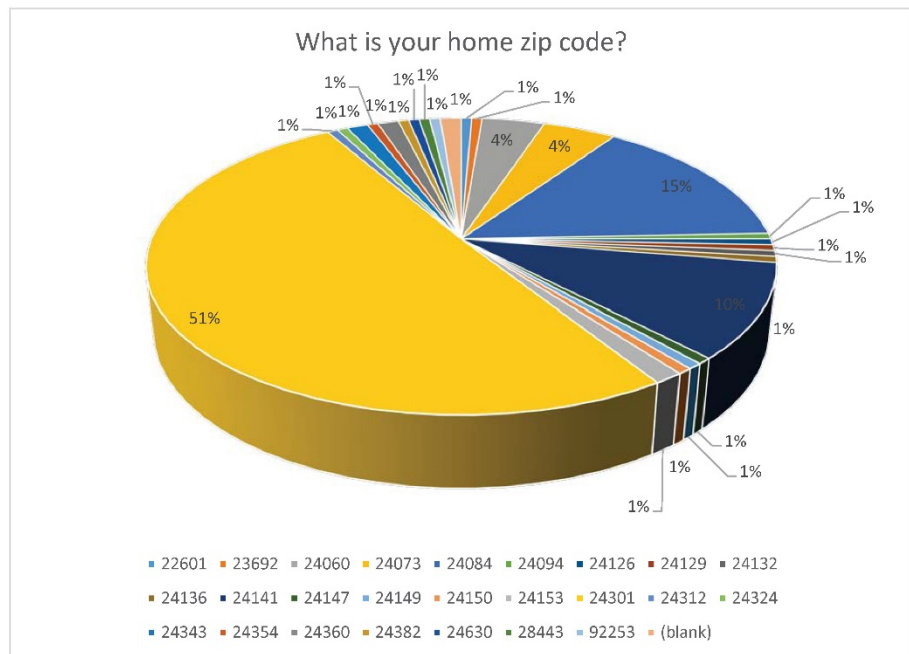


# GATEWOOD PARK 2035 MASTER PLAN

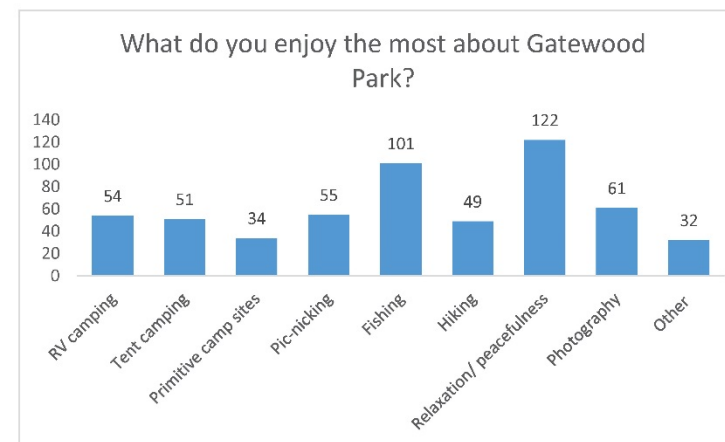
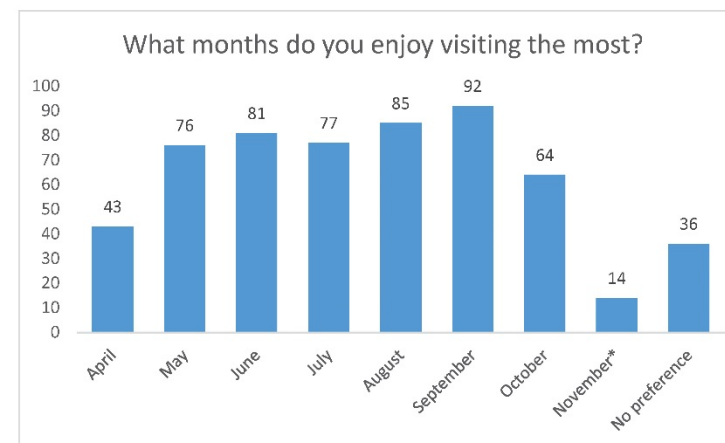
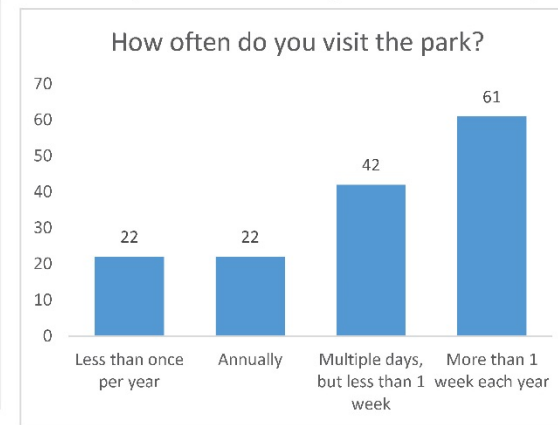
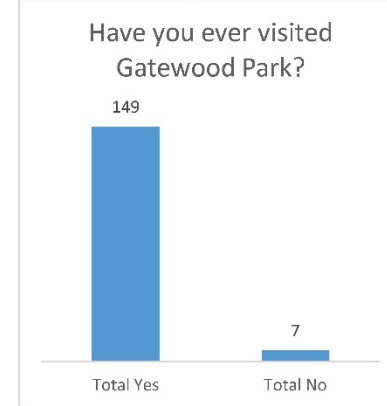
## Survey Results

Town of Pulaski Office, Engineering Conference Room  
19 October 2015 | 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

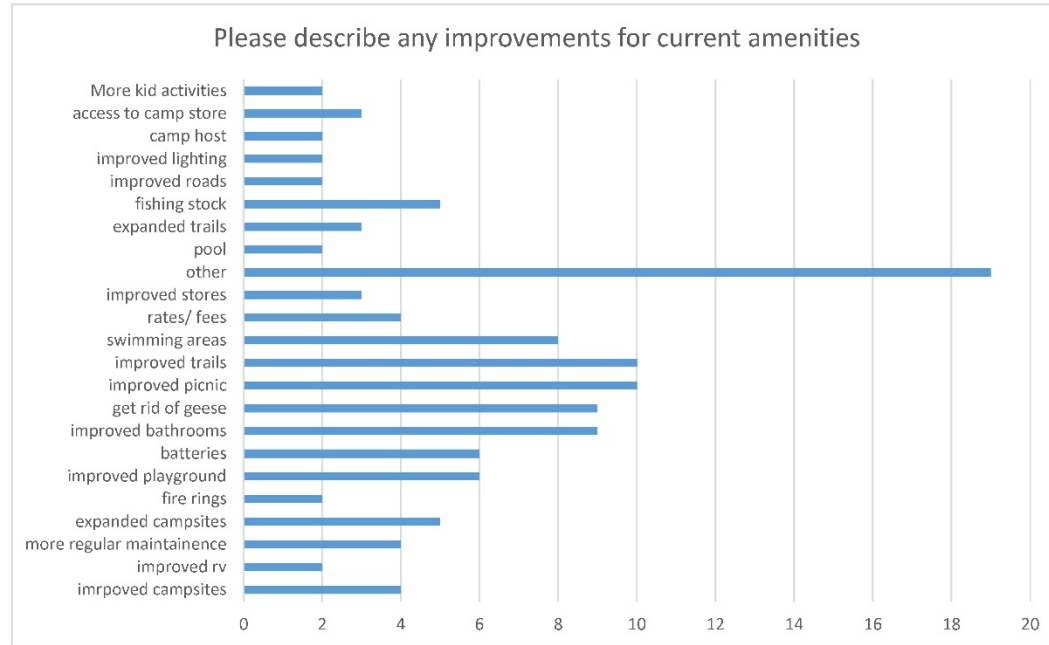
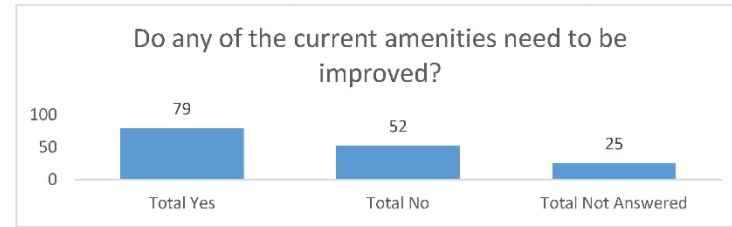
- I. Total of 156 surveys between August 28- October 16, 2015
  - a. 135 online surveys, 19 in person surveys
- II. Where are they from?
  - a. 51% Pulaski; 16% Dublin; 10% Radford; 4% Christiansburg, 4% Blacksburg, 15% other



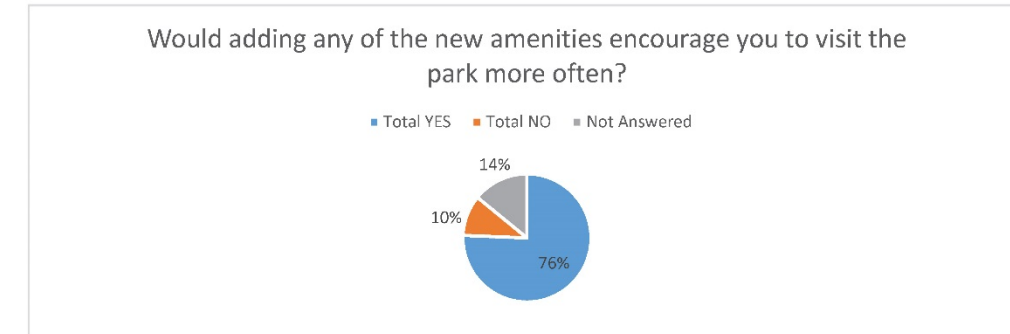
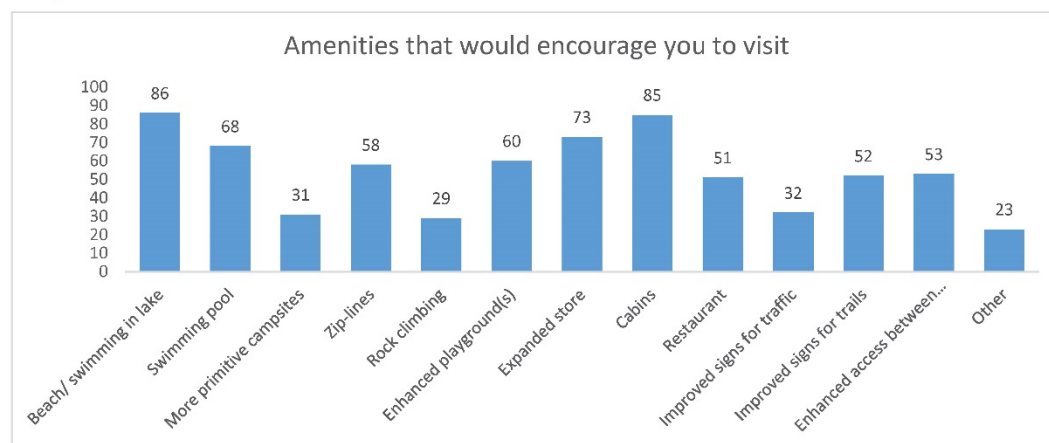
### III. How many are regular attendees? How often do they visit? When do they visit? What do they enjoy?



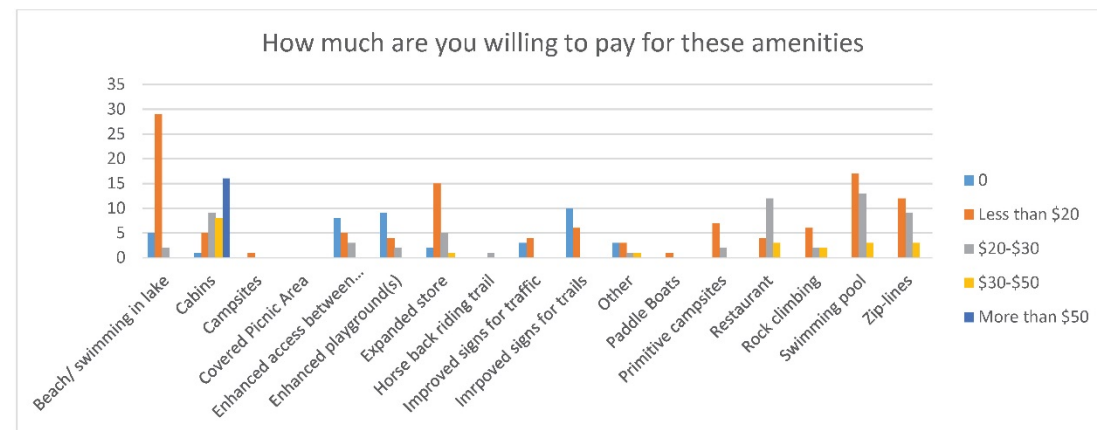
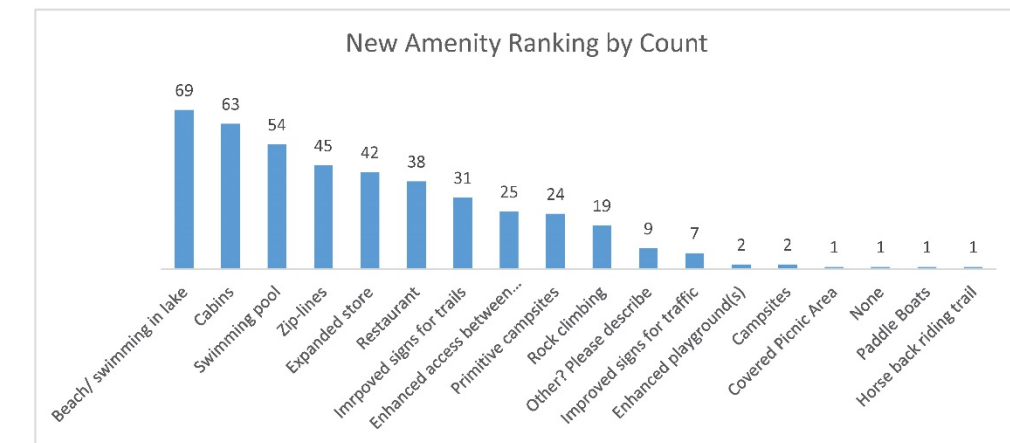
IV. Do these park amenities need to be improved? What needs to be improved?



V. What new types of amenities would you like to see at Gatewood Park? Would these encourage you to go to the Park?



VI. Which of the new amenities would you prioritize over the others? How much would you be willing to pay for these amenities?





GATEWOOD PARK  
OPEN HOUSE

Pulaski Historic Train Station  
2 December 2015 | 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Sign In Sheet

Name	Contact
Jamie Redcliffe	Pulaski Town Council
RJ Gandy	
Kisa Judds	Gatewood Community
JEFF WERRELL	TOWN OF PULASKI
RON HALL	FRIENDS OF PEAK CREEK
LINDA HALL	PULASKI PLANNING COMMISSION
JIM KIDD	PULASKI TOWN COUNCIL
Dana Anderson	
Doug Andrews	
CHARLES RHETT	
	/

