Site Specific Master Plan for Cub Creek Park Town of Wilkesboro

March 28, 2018



Site Analysis

Cub Creek Park is a 117-acre park located adjacent to downtown Wilkesboro. It consists of three sections: the main body of the park that contains the most and greatest variety of recreation features, and two extensions that contain only mountain bike trails.

The main body of the park was farmed before the park was established. Acquisition of the initial park property by the Town of Wilkesboro took place in 1969, but several other tracts have been added over the years. Development of recreation facilities on the main body of the park began in 1970, and has continued off and on through 2017.

The two extensions are named the "Call Farm" and "Perkins Place" for reference. Within the past few years, the Town began development of mountain bike trails on this land, completing them in 2017.

The main body of the park is elongated, measuring approximately 4,400 feet long and 500 feet wide at its widest point. It borders Cub Creek its entire length and is in the creek's 100-year floodplain. Consequently, this portion of the park is level, with very little change in elevation. However, the topography rises abruptly just beyond its border. In recent years the Town has commissioned extensive stream restoration on Cub Creek and stormwater management, which has mitigated flooding.

This portion of the park is well-landscaped, but very little natural vegetation exists except for what has been restored along the streambanks. Vegetation consists mostly of grass and planted trees.

The main body of the park is developed for recreation. It contains a wide variety of facilities- a playground, picnic shelters, walking trail, etc.- which are shown on the existing facilities map. Much of the park's acreage consists of ball fields. The extreme eastern end of the park is a grassy field that is undeveloped except for a walking trail.

The Call Farm section extends south from the western end of the park. Cub Creek flows through almost the center of the tract, with approximately half of the tract being in its floodplain. A wetland area exists along a portion of the creek. The remainder of the tract rises abruptly approximately 100 feet in elevation from the floodplain. The tract is mostly wooded. Mountain bike trails is the only developed feature in this park section.

The Perkins Place section extends south from the middle of the park's main body. It contains no stream and is rather steep. The tract is mostly wooded. Mountain bike trails is the only developed feature in this park section.

Cub Creek Park is situated three blocks off downtown's Main Street, but it is surrounded mostly by residential development. Small portions border a commercial area, farmland, and County government agencies. The extreme southern boundary of the park lies approximately 800 feet from Hwy 421.

Existing structures are shown on the existing facilities map. They are buildings and equipment typically found in municipal parks- restrooms/concessions, picnic shelters, playground equipment, maintenance buildings, etc.

The park is accessed by automobile from four different streets. Six parking lots are available for visitors. The north side near downtown can be accessed by pedestrians and bicyclists. Pedestrian/bicyclist access is also available at the end of Call Street on the southern side.

No significant natural communities or known archaeological site exist in or near the park. No historical sites are in the park.

Recreational Needs & Capital Improvements (recommended facilities)

Stone steps such as these will enable access to Cub Creek

Improve access to Cub Creek

Access to Cub Creek should be improved. Rest and relaxation areas ranked fourth (72%) among features that survey respondents want. In addition, 65% of respondents said that they either currently participate or are interested in participating in fishing. As the primary natural feature in the park, and the only creek in the entire park system, it should receive at least as much attention as the developed features. Improving access will help showcase recent streambank restoration efforts that have transformed Cub Creek itself into a scenic venue. Access points have already been identified by informal worn trails made by those even now reaching the stream. These trails should be widened, brush cleared, and stone steps placed where needed.

Estimated cost: \$1,000. Much of the work can be accomplished by Town employees.

Install fitness stations along the Cub Creek Park walking trail



Room exists to install fitness stations along Cub Creek Park's walking/jogging trail.

Use of fitness stations has become a popular way to enhance walking/jogging along park trails. Dozens of exercise equipment pieces are available at prices. reasonable Examples include a sit-up bench, push-up bars, balance beam, elliptical machine, and many more. Installing fitness stations was endorsed by 54% of respondents (77% of staff). With 84% of respondents currently participating in walking/jogging (& 12%

not, but interested in doing so), the number of potential users is more than substantial. It is noteworthy that management personnel of W. Kerr Scott Reservoir see a need/demand for outdoor fitness stations, but none are planned to be installed. No fitness stations exist elsewhere in town.

Estimated cost: A collection of 44 different pieces of equipment available from an online seller averages \$1,081 each, not including shipping. See http://www.outdoor-fitness.com/index.html for descriptions and a price list.

<u>Enhance the undeveloped portion of Cub Creek Park near Oakwoods Road to accommodate passive recreation</u>

Trees and more benches in this section of the park would provide shade and seating for those seeking minimally developed rest and relaxation areas, which numbered 72% of survey respondents (89% in the staff survey). Further, 85% currently participate or are interested in participating in outdoor rest and relaxation areas. No similar passive public recreation areas exist in Wilkesboro. A picnic shelter is also proposed for this area as a separate recommendation.

Estimated cost: trees = \$2,000; benches = \$3,200



An entrance sign similar to this one on Bridge Street is needed near Oakwoods

Erect an entrance sign at the Oakwoods Road end of Cub Creek Park

89% of staff surveyed consider installing these signs to be a priority/high priority.

Estimated cost: \$8,000

Replace the dugouts at the ballfield near Bridge Street

The two dugouts are aging and worn. This action, along with the proposed new restrooms/concession stand, will provide a much-needed

refurbishment of this ballfield. This ballfield is used heavily by the Wilkes County Parks & Recreation athletic programs.

Estimated cost: \$3,500 each

Construct a picnic shelter at the recycling center

Room exists at this location for a shelter, which would also double as a trailhead facility for the Jail Break Loop Mountain Bike Trail. Picnic shelters ranked fourth in the survey (72%) as a facility that respondents think should be added to the parks. In the staff survey this action ranked fifth (77%). Interviews with other recreation providers in the county revealed picnic facilities in the area are in short supply, as shelters in other locations are frequently booked.

Estimated cost= \$14,000

Construct a picnic shelter near Oakwoods Road in Cub Creek Park

This is an ideal location for a shelter, as almost no facilities exist at the extreme eastern end of the park. When coupled with the proposed shelter at the recycling center, the park will have a shelter on each end and two in the middle. Picnic shelters ranked fourth in the survey (72%) as a facility that respondents think should be added to the parks. In the staff survey this action ranked fifth (77%). Interviews with other recreation providers in the county revealed picnic facilities in the area are in short supply, as shelters in other locations are frequently booked. Estimated cost= \$14,000

Install water fountains throughout Cub Creek Park

Though not in the survey, the need for more water fountains has been expressed by many people. Two exist at the restrooms, but the linear nature of the park means that they are somewhat inaccessible from several locations. Six fountains are recommended.

Estimated cost: \$1,800 each

Establish a trailhead near the end of Corporation Street at Bryant Village

A trailhead is needed at this location to enhance access to the trails from outside Cub Creek Park. All staff in the survey agreed (100%) that constructing trailheads should be a priority/high priority; 48% in the citizen survey. Features should include a kiosk, bike rack, picnic table, shelter, sign, & a water fountain. Only one other external trailhead exists, and it is not fully developed.

Estimated cost: kiosk=\$3,000; bike rack=\$400; picnic table=\$800; shelter=\$4,200; water fountain=\$1,800; sign= \$1,000

Construct a ramp that will allow access for the handicapped to Cub Creek for fishing & scenic viewing



Recent stream restoration projects have made Cub Creek a popular trout fishing destination.

"Recreation features accessible to the handicapped" came in third in the survey (79%; 66% in the staff survey, with no one disagreeing/strongly disagreeing). In addition, 65% of team and anterestidate at the except strong that th

disagreeing). In addition, 65% of respondents said that they either currently participate or are interested in participating in fishing. "Take a Kid Fishing Day," held twice a year in the park, is an incredibly popular event. Such a facility will not only allow for fishing, but will also serve those who want access to the creek for scenic viewing and relaxation (rest & relaxation areas came in fourth (72%) as a

feature that respondents desire). No other similar facility exists in the area. Handicapped parking spaces should be added to the nearest parking lot and a sidewalk built to the ramp.

Estimated cost: \$60,000

Install a universal design playground

Such a facility will also address handicap accessibility concern expressed in the survey. No similar playground exists in "Universal jurisdiction. the design" is a principal that stresses the need for facilities to be accessible to everyone regardless of abilities; not as a set-aside only for the disabled. Therefore, the handicapped can play along with other children and not feel isolated because of their disability. Thus, the proposed playground will serve all children and not a segment narrow of the population; maximizina the



Universal design playground equipment, such as this one, will serve children of all abilities.

impact of dollars spent. Playgrounds in general ranked high in the survey (69%; 77% in the staff survey, with no one disagreeing/strongly disagreeing), with 61% of respondents

saying that they either currently participate or are interested in participating the activity.

Estimated cost: \$200,000

Add features to the Call Street trailhead

This location is important for users to access trails from outside Cub Creek Park. All staff in the survey agreed (100%) that constructing trailheads should be a priority/high priority; 48% in the citizen survey. Parking is needed at this trailhead. Other features should include a kiosk, bike rack, shelter, sign, lighting, & a water fountain. No other external trailhead exists in the park.

Estimated cost: parking=\$10,000; kiosk=\$3,000;

bike rack=\$400; shelter=\$4,200; water

fountain=\$1,800; sign=\$1,000



The swinging bridge at the Call Street Trailhead. This trailhead should be further enhanced with additional features.

<u>Install emergency towers along mountain bike trails</u>

Safety and possibly medical emergencies are a concern for the more secluded areas along the trails. These ADA compliant phone towers are solar-powered and feature an auto-dialing feature, and a phone panel light for easy visibility at night or in low light. Included is a blue light strobe which automatically activates when a call is made.

Estimated cost: \$13,100 each

Replace all trash cans with visually appealing ones designed for park use

The existing trash cans are utility-grade, made for home or commercial use. While they are in good condition, they don't match the high quality of other park facilities. Replacing them with covered, park-grade cans will improve aesthetics. The cost will be significant, but individually they are not expensive relative to other park facilities. If replaced over a number of years, it would be affordable without



 $Replacing \ trash\ cans\ with\ ones\ designed\ for\ park\ use\ will\ improve\ aesthetics$

sacrificing other needed items. The number existing and proposed is approximately 77.

Estimated cost: \$1,000 each recycled plastic; \$661 wood; \$373-\$675 concrete

Install kiosks throughout Cub Creek Park

Kiosks with maps and other information are needed to orient infrequent park users to its many features. The linear characteristic of Cub Creek Park makes finding a specific recreation facility daunting if a user must search on foot. Kiosks should be installed at the following locations:

- End of the walking trail at College Street
- Call Farm Loop Trail near the dog park
- Perkins Place Loop Trail near Bridge Street
- Parking lot at the tennis courts
- Bryant Village Trailhead
- Call Street Trailhead

- Parking lot near Oakwoods Road
- Future connecting point to the Yadkin River Greenway near Oakwoods Road

Estimated cost: \$3,000 each

Replace restrooms near Bridge Street at Cub Creek Park

This action received top priority in the maintenance section of the survey (63% priority/high priority). In the staff survey, 89% marked it has a priority/high priority, with no one considering it a low priority/not a priority (11% neutral). Restrooms came in first by a wide margin (83% agree/strongly agree; 100% in the staff survey) among the facilities that respondents think should be added to existing facilities. No other restrooms exist in this area of the park.

Estimated cost: \$100,000



Restrooms & restroom renovation ranked first in the survey.

Pave park parking lots

Most survey respondents ranked paving projects low in priority or expressed indifference, which is not unexpected as direct recreation opportunities would understandably be more popular. However, staff see the need more clearly. All the proposed paving projects except the dog park and the basketball courts received over 50% priority or high priority votes by the staff (see Staff Survey Results for the score of specific projects). Two paving projects have been approved in the budget in the past six years, and of all proposed recreation projects not approved, one-third (five) have been paving activities. Paving the dog park has been seen as a consistent need, as it has been a budget



Paving gravel parking lots is included in the capital improvements plan.

proposal every year for the past six years. The Westwood Park lot is a close second, being proposed for five of the past six years. While funds would not allow for all lots to be paved in a single year, consistent appropriations would eventually achieve the goal of having all parking lots paved.

Estimated cost: \$20,000 - \$50,000 per lot

Construct restrooms near the playground in Cub Creek Park

New restrooms near the playground in Cub Creek Park came in a very close second (62%) in the survey (89% in the staff survey) as a needed new support facility. A much stronger endorsement is revealed (83%; 100% in the staff survey) in the section of the survey where the respondents were asked if restrooms in general should be added. New restrooms were among budget proposals each of the past three years (see Proposed Recreation Capital Outlays Not Approved chart) and ranked third as the most common proposal for the past six years. No restrooms exist in this area of the park. The extensive linear nature of the park means that more than one restroom is needed to serve all users in all areas of the park.

Estimated cost: \$100,000



Install lights at the basketball and pickleball courts

Installing lights will extend the potential use of these facilities, thus maximizing past investments. This action ranked sixth (44%; also 44% in the staff survey) in the survey regarding maintenance and support facilities. Outdoor basketball

courts exist at Westwood and River's Edge park, but they are a long distance from this area of town. No other pickleball courts exist in the jurisdiction.

Estimated cost: \$80,000

Install wayfinding signs throughout Cub Creek Park

Because Cub Creek Park is linear, finding a particular feature for those unfamiliar with it can be frustrating; i.e. searching involves walking long distances. Considering the fact that 39% of survey respondents visit a Wilkesboro park only a few times per year, wayfinding signs are especially critical. Besides Wilkesboro residents, other county residents use the park for athletic games, and might be unfamiliar with other park features. Further, infrequent visitors attending events downtown or in town for other reasons would find wayfinding signs to be very helpful. All staff who took the survey (100%) consider wayfinding signs to be a priority/high priority. In addition to the monument park identification sign proposed elsewhere, wayfinding should include vehicle directional, pedestrian directional, and asset destination signs. Design of the signs should follow the guidelines established by the Yadkin Valley Heritage Corridor Initiative.

Estimated cost: \$100,000

Program Description

The main purpose of the park is to provide a wide variety of recreation facilities to Wilkesboro residents. It is the town's largest and most centrally located park in terms of residential areas, and therefore serves as the primary recreation feature in town. The design of the park has been piecemeal over the years as more land has been acquired. The design of the park for future recreation facilities, as shown on the site plan map, was dictated by the location of existing facilities and space available for new ones.

Physical Needs

Capital improvements (recommended recreation and support facilities) are listed above. Roads and utilities are already in place. No land acquisition is proposed to expand Cub Creek Park. Major expansion has recently occurred with the establishment of the mountain biking trails. Less than half of the survey respondents felt that the Town should purchase land to develop new recreation facilities in the near future. The recreation needs of Wilkesboro residents can be adequately met by adding new facilities to the existing park and improving/maintaining the facilities that already exist.

Project Costs

Project costs are listed above in the Capital Improvements section. A Capital Improvements Plan is submitted as a separate document.

Public Involvement

A citizen survey of Wilkesboro residents was conducted in February 2018. Approximately 1,000 surveys were distributed to all utility customers (i.e. every household in Wilkesboro). Two hundred and nine were completed and returned.

In response to the question "For each of the following types of recreation facilities, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that they should be added to existing facilities in Wilkesboro.", the types that received 50% or more agrees/strongly agrees were:

11. For each of the following types of recreation facilities, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that they should be added to existing facilities in Wilkesboro.	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Unfamiliar with facility
Restrooms	83%	10%	5%	2%
Benches	81%	13%	6%	2%
Recreation features accessible to the handicapped	79%	16%	4%	2%
Rest & relaxation areas	72%	20%	7%	2%
Picnic shelters	72%	16%	8%	4%
Playgrounds	69%	22%	8%	2%
Community gardens	63%	24%	8%	5%
Outdoor grills	58%	29%	11%	3%
Unpaved hiking/biking trails	57%	25%	12%	6%
Paved walking/biking trails	55%	22%	20%	3%
Fitness stations	54%	30%	11%	4%
Picnic tables (not in shelters)	52%	30%	13%	5%
Dog park	52%	32%	12%	4%
Free Little Library Book Exchange	50%	34%	12%	4%

In addition, the survey asked the following question and received responses as shown:

6. From the list of	Currently
activities below,	participate or
indicate your (or	are interested
someone in your	in doing so
household) level of	
participation or	
interest in the	
following activities.	
Walking or jogging	96%
Outdoor rest &	85%
relaxation	
Hiking	82%
Picnicking	82%
Fishing	65%
Playground	61%
Corn hole/bean bag	58%
toss games	
Biking (road)	56%
Gardening	56%
Dog park	56%
Mountain biking	44%
Basketball	43%
Disc golf	37%
Tennis	36%
Climbing wall/tower	36%
Horseshoes	35%
Pickleball	32%
Volleyball	31%
Baseball	30%
Football	29%
Softball	27%
Shuffleboard	26%
Soccer	19%
Tetherball	17%
Four square court	15%
Skateboarding	10%

Staff Survey

Needs identified by staff are important in developing recommendations for maintenance, support facilities, and new recreation opportunities. Town employees might be aware of maintenance issues, safety concerns, and infrastructure needs that would not be evident or a priority to the public. Public enthusiasm for a recreation facility might need to be tempered by considerations such as initial expense, site availability and preparation, maintenance costs, liability, trends that will likely fade over time, experiences of other recreation providers, and other issues that would affect the viability of a proposed recreation project. With more day-to-day involvement in recreation and interactions with other recreation professionals, staff persons might be in a better position to spot permanent trends, be informed of new features available for facilities, and be aware of achievable alternatives to projects that would otherwise be unfeasible.

Nine staff persons were asked to respond to questions 9, 10, and 11 in the citizens' survey. Following are the results. The most important insight gained from the survey is that staff consider paving and maintenance/support facility projects to be higher priorities by a significant degree than do the citizens who answered the same survey questions.

9. Mark your priority level for each of the listed paving projects.	Priority/ High Priority	Don't know/ Neutral	Low priority/ Not a priority
Pave the parking lot at Rolling Pines Disc Golf Course	77%	11%	11%
Pave the parking lot at the Winkler ball fields	67%	22%	11%
Repave the parking lot at the recycling center	66%	22%	11%
Pave the parking lot at Westwood Park	56%	22%	11%
Pave the parking lot at Oakwoods ball fields	55%	11%	33%
Pave the parking lot at the dog park	44%	11%	44%
Pave the parking lot at the basketball courts	22%	22%	55%

STAFF SURVEY 10. Mark your priority level for each of these actions related to the maintenance and support of facilities.	Priority/ High Priority	Don't know/ Neutral	Low priority/ Not a priority
Install wayfinding signs throughout Cub Creek Park	100%	0%	0%
Construct trailheads at the biking/hiking trails	100%	0%	0%
Erect an entrance sign at the lower end of Cub Creek Park	89%	0%	11%
Erect an entrance sign at Rolling Pines Disc Golf Course	89%	0%	11%
Renovate the restrooms at Cub Creek Park	89%	11%	0%
Construct restrooms near the playground in Cub Creek Park	89%	0%	11%
Build a new restroom/concession stand near the dog park	77%	0%	22%
Construct restrooms at Rolling Pines Disc Golf Course	77%	22%	0%
Plant grass on the infield at Westwood Park	56%	0%	44%
Install lights at basketball and pickleball courts	44%	0%	56%
Resurface the basketball court at Westwood Park	44%	22%	33%
Replace the entrance sign at Westwood Park	33%	11%	56%
Resurface the basketball courts at Cub Creek Park	33%	22%	44%
Resurface the tennis courts	22%	22%	56%

STAFF SURVEY 11. For each of the following types of recreation facilities, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that they should be added to existing facilities in Wilkesboro.	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Unfamiliar with facility
Restrooms	100%	0%	0%	0%
Rest & relaxation areas	89%	11%	0%	0%
Benches	88%	11%	0%	0%
Picnic tables (not in shelters)	78%	22%	0%	0%
Outdoor grills	78%	22%	0%	0%
Outdoor sand volleyball courts	78%	22%	0%	0%
Paved walking/biking trails	77%	11%	11%	0%
Picnic shelters	77%	22%	0%	0%
Playgrounds	77%	22%	0%	0%
Community gardens	77%	22%	0%	0%
Fitness stations	77%	0%	22%	0%
Unpaved hiking/biking trails	67%	33%	0%	0%
Recreation features accessible to the handicapped	66%	33%	0%	0%
Dog park	63%	38%	0%	0%
Climbing wall/tower	57%	43%	0%	0%
Tennis courts	56%	33%	11%	0%
Outdoor basketball courts	56%	44%	0%	0%
Free Little Library Book Exchange	55%	33%	11%	0%
Multi-purpose athletic fields (soccer, football, etc.)	44%	56%	0%	0%
Outdoor batting cages	44%	33%	11%	0%
Concessions	44%	56%	0%	0%
Bike share	44%	56%	0%	0%
Bocce ball courts	38%	25%	38%	0%
Baseball/softball fields	33%	67%	0%	0%
Horseshoe pits	33%	67%	0%	0%
Corn hole/bean bag toss games	33%	44%	22%	0%
Skateboard park	22%	33%	44%	0%
Shuffleboard courts	22%	56%	22%	0%

Croquet fields	22%	33%	44%	0%
Tetherball	0%	78%	22%	0%
Four square courts	0%	78%	22%	0%

Attachments

Aerial view

Elevation contours

Floodplain & wetlands map

Soil types map

Existing facilities maps (four park sections)

Recommended facilities maps (four park sections)



























