

## Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department Master Plan Update Overview

### **Brief History of the Four Plans:**

#### **1969 Plan, Park, Facilities, and Open Spaces for Jackson County 1991-2000, Master Plan 2005 and Master Plan Update 2013**

In 1984, the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board determined that the 1969 plan was no longer useful. The Advisory Board then focused on six facility priorities and those facilities were identified as:

- 1) Softball Complex
- 2) Indoor Recreation
- 3) Management of a facility in Cashiers
- 4) Meeting place in Cullowhee
- 5) Trails-jogging, horse, hiking and bicycle
- 6) Senior Center

Those same six remained the focus of the Parks, Facilities, and Open Spaces Master Plan for Jackson County 1991-2000. The focus was expanded to include two directions:

- 1) Projects requiring major capital outlay
- 2) Projects requiring minimal capital outlay

Projects requiring major equipment included:

- 1) Large county park of 20 acres or more in the Cullowhee District
- 2) Gymnasium apart from a school
- 3) Indoor Pool
- 4) Multipurpose Center
- 5) Classroom/Activity Rooms/Meeting Space in Sylva
- 6) Softball/Soccer Fields

Under the two directions, projects were labeled long and short-term goals:

The indoor pool was placed under the long-term goals

On January 11, 2005, the Master Plan was adopted and created by Haden/Stanziale Planning and Landscape Architecture. This Master Plan identifies the current facility and program offerings for Jackson County and creates a strategy that allows the Recreation and Parks Department to meet the county's future needs. In order to compile the necessary information to determine these needs several steps were taken and some of which included: Host a series of public workshops, survey residents and users to determine how they feel about current programs and facilities, tabulate and analyze survey results and comments made during the public input sessions and establish an action plan based on data and information gathered through the step process.

Four Public Open House were held in different locations around Jackson County. These meetings gave county residents a chance to better understand the master plan process, give input on any recreational based topics and ask questions of the Recreation and Parks Staff and their consultants in a formal setting. Open House meeting were held at the Recreation Center in Cullowhee, Social Services building in Sylva, Smoky Mountain Elementary in Qualla, and Cashiers Library. The following are a list of some questions presented to the public to answer:

- 1) Which Jackson County recreational facilities do you use?
- 2) What type of recreation do you participate in on a regular basis?
- 3) How do you feel about the current recreational programs and facilities offered by Jackson County?
- 4) What type of recreational facilities and programs would you like to see in Jackson County?

Approximately 325 Jackson County residents agreed to participate in the Resident/Participant Surveys. The largest response was from the group ranging 31 to 45 years of age. All other age groups were equally represented. Females made up 56% of the surveyed.

When asked about what elements they would like to see incorporated into developing and maintaining new county parks, the majority would like an increased number of indoor facilities, including an indoor pool. Reasons included needed space for competition swimming, exercise and play in the winter months and therapy for older citizens.

Under this Master Plan, the County was broken down in to four districts (1) Dillsboro/Quall District, (2) Sylva /Webster (3) Cullowhee (4) Cashiers/Glenville. The Recreation Center was a topic of numerous survey responses. An indoor swimming pool was by far the most requested new facility according to surveys from the Sylva and Cullowhee Open Houses. Within the Cullowhee District, it has was broken down in to Immediate Needs (0-2 years), Near Term Needs (3-5 years) and Long Term Needs (6-10 years). Plan and construct an indoor pool was placed in the Immediate Needs (0-2 years).

(Hand Out Open House Questions #1)

In three of the four open houses the Indoor Pool was the number one thing mentioned when the question was asked what type of recreational facilities and programs would you like to see in Jackson County except in Cashiers, which was second under New Recreation Center.

**Master Plan Update (Survey Questions 2012)**

Equinox Environmental completed this Master Plan Update. The recommendations in the plan heavily incorporated public and staff input, including the following information, but not limited to: Public survey results, public meeting comments, facility inventories, department input and national and state recreation trends.

Data result summary: (4) public meetings were held in addition to online surveys to aid in acquiring a larger sample community to base planning recommendations. There were 841 Jackson County Residents that participated in the public process. The survey consist of 20 questions and was distributed via an online survey tool, paper copies of the survey was giving out at department programs and was available at the Recreation Center in Cullowhee. 763 surveys were completed from October 31 to December 12, 2012 approximately double the amount completed for the 2005 Master Plan. Breakdown of the completed surveys are as follows: Cullowhee District 40.6%, Sylva/Webster 37.9%, Dillsboro/Qualla 12.6% and Cashiers/Glenville 8.9%.

(Handout questions #2)

Key Questions:

- 1) Which facilities or improvements would you be most willing to support funding?  
Construct centrally located indoor pool.....534 in support
- 2) Do you believe Jackson County needs more of these facilities?  
Indoor Pool.....555 yes
- 3) In your opinion, how important are the following potential parks and recreation improvements?  
Construct centrally located indoor swimming pool.....559 important

Again, each District was assigned immediate and long-term needs and again in the Cullowhee District immediate need was to include an ADA accessible indoor pool with locker rooms.

In conclusion, based on the four plans described above each plan discussed the need of an indoor swimming pool. The last two touched base on it being centrally located. Given the fact that the Cullowhee area is the center of the county, I feel that that most logical place for the pool to be constructed is to expand the Recreation Center in Cullowhee for several reasons:

- 1) 20 minute drive from Whittier and 20-30 minute drive from Cashiers
- 2) Flat land that the county already owns
- 3) Support staff in place
- 4) Parking that could support facility
- 5) Support facilities in place bathrooms ready to be expanded upon pool construction

#### Indoor Pool Amenities:

25-meter pool (8 lane)

Diving well area (high school diving team, water aerobics)

Heated Therapy pool (separate entrance, partner with Harris hospital and other wellness business' to help with physical therapy)

Classroom spaces, Party/Event Room

Large Deck space to accommodate large swim meets

Play area for Youth: Fountain, buckets, sprayers

#1

# Survey

## Jackson County Recreation Master Plan Public Survey

As part of the Jackson County Recreation Master Plan, the Jackson County Recreation and Parks Department would like your input on the county's current and future recreation and parks system. This information will enable Jackson County to better serve you and your family's recreation and parks needs both now and in the future. Please take your time filling out the information below. This form should be returned to the Jackson County Recreation and Parks Department by February 15, 2004. Please contact Jeff Carpenter at (828) 293-3053 or [jeffcarpenter@jacksonnc.org](mailto:jeffcarpenter@jacksonnc.org) with any questions you may have regarding this project of this survey. Thank you for your participation.

### 1. In what town/city/area of Jackson County do you live?

- |                                 |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Balsam    | <input type="radio"/> Glenville | <input type="radio"/> Outside Jackson County: |
| <input type="radio"/> Cashiers  | <input type="radio"/> Qualla    | _____   |
| <input type="radio"/> Cullowhee | <input type="radio"/> Sylva     | _____   |
| <input type="radio"/> Dillsboro | <input type="radio"/> Webster   |   |

### 2. Gender: Male Female

### 3. Enter the number of persons in your household by the appropriate age group:

Under 9 \_\_\_\_\_ 10-15 \_\_\_\_\_ 16-25 \_\_\_\_\_ 26-35 \_\_\_\_\_ 36-50 \_\_\_\_\_ 51-60 \_\_\_\_\_ 61 & Up \_\_\_\_\_

Your Age:  15-30  31-45  46-55  56 & Up

### 4. Where do you exercise?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Home                      | <input type="radio"/> Outdoors               |
| <input type="radio"/> Jackson County Facilities | <input type="radio"/> Private Gym/Facilities |
| <input type="radio"/> Other: _____              |  |

### 5. In which of the following recreational activities and programs have you or a member of your family participated within the last year?

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Aerobics                   | <input type="radio"/> Frisbee/Disc Golf | <input type="radio"/> Senior fitness           |
| <input type="radio"/> Arts/crafts                | <input type="radio"/> Gardening         | <input type="radio"/> Shuffleboard             |
| <input type="radio"/> Baseball                   | <input type="radio"/> Golf              | <input type="radio"/> Skateboarding            |
| <input type="radio"/> Basketball                 | <input type="radio"/> Gymnastics        | <input type="radio"/> Skiing                   |
| <input type="radio"/> Biking (Mountain or Road)  | <input type="radio"/> Hiking            | <input type="radio"/> Soccer                   |
| <input type="radio"/> Boating (Canoe)            | <input type="radio"/> Horseshoes        | <input type="radio"/> Softball                 |
| <input type="radio"/> Bocce                      | <input type="radio"/> Hunting           | <input type="radio"/> Special needs recreation |
| <input type="radio"/> Camping                    | <input type="radio"/> Kayaking          | <input type="radio"/> Spin cycling             |
| <input type="radio"/> Cultural arts              | <input type="radio"/> Kickboxing        | <input type="radio"/> Summer camps             |
| <input type="radio"/> Dance                      | <input type="radio"/> Martial arts      | <input type="radio"/> Swimming                 |
| <input type="radio"/> Drama                      | <input type="radio"/> Picnics           | <input type="radio"/> Tennis                   |
| <input type="radio"/> Equestrian/Horse           | <input type="radio"/> Playgrounds       | <input type="radio"/> Visiting nature parks    |
| <input type="radio"/> Festivals & Special Events | <input type="radio"/> Reading           | <input type="radio"/> Volleyball               |
| <input type="radio"/> Fishing                    | <input type="radio"/> Rock climbing     | <input type="radio"/> Walking/running/jogging  |
| <input type="radio"/> Football                   | <input type="radio"/> Roller-blading    | <input type="radio"/> Weight training          |

Other activities: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6a. Which of the following Jackson County recreational facilities have you visited within the past year?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Ralph J. Andrews Park Campground                   | <input type="radio"/> Pinnacle Park                     |
| <input type="radio"/> Blue Ridge School                                  | <input type="radio"/> Poteet Park                       |
| <input type="radio"/> Cullowhee Valley Elem.                             | <input type="radio"/> Scotts Creek Elementary           |
| <input type="radio"/> East LaPorte River Access Park                     | <input type="radio"/> Smoky Mountain Elementary         |
| <input type="radio"/> Fairview Youth Complex                             | <input type="radio"/> Smoky Mountain High School        |
| <input type="radio"/> Jackson County Recreation Park & Recreation Center | <input type="radio"/> School of Alternatives- 'The Hub' |
| <input type="radio"/> Judaculla Rock                                     | <input type="radio"/> Webster School                    |
| <input type="radio"/> Mark Watson Park                                   | <input type="radio"/> Other: _____                      |

**6b. What other area recreational and/or cultural facilities have you visited within the last year?**

- Appalachian Trail
- Biltmore Estate
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Cherokee Reservation
- Ellicott Rock Wilderness
- Foothills Trail
- Gorges State Park
- Great Smoky Mountain National Park
- Great Smoky Mountain Railroad
- Nantahala River
- Panthertown Valley
- Pisgah National Forest
- Tuckasegee River
- Whitewater Falls

Other recreational facilities visited not mentioned above? \_\_\_\_\_

**7. How would you rate recreational programs offered by Jackson County Recreation and Parks Department?**

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't Know

**8. What improvements would you like to see in existing recreational programs or county parks?**

- Increase number of parks
- Increase beautification of parks
- Renovate outdoor athletic courts (basketball, tennis, volleyball, etc.)
- Renovated outdoor athletic fields (baseball, soccer, etc.)
- Additional restrooms in parks
- Renovate/update playground equipment

Discuss: \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Which important elements would you like to see incorporated into developing and maintaining new parks in Jackson County?**

- More athletic fields and active recreation opportunities
- More passive recreation opportunities
- More open space areas
- More river access points
- Provide facilities/activities to a more widespread area of the county
- Providing more diverse recreational programs
- Providing more indoor recreational programs

Additional elements you would like considered for future parks: \_\_\_\_\_

*Any additional comments that you believe will enable us to provide a more comprehensive recreational plan are welcomed below.*

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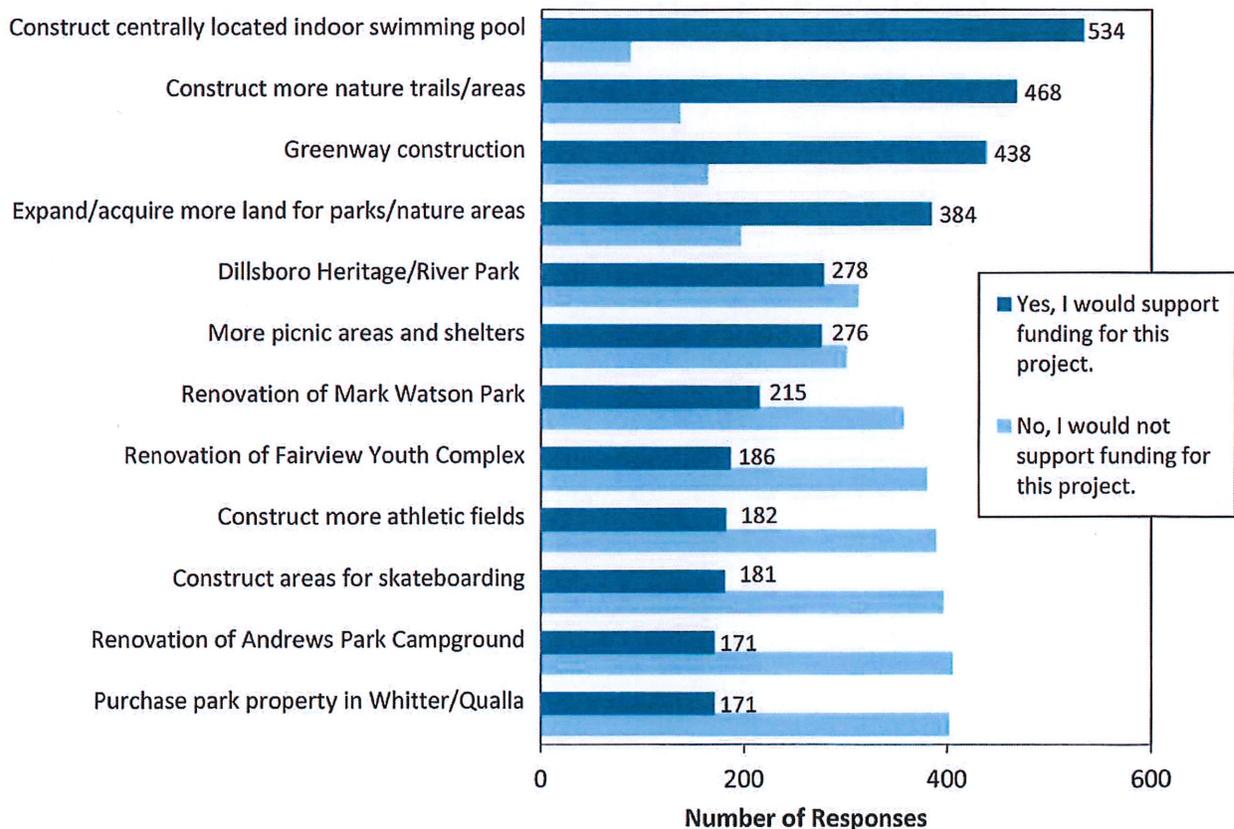
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**1. Public Survey Results**

A public survey was compiled by JCRPD and Equinox Environmental to help quantify public comments regarding the current status and future needs of the Recreation and Parks Department. The survey consisted of 20 questions and was distributed via an online survey tool, SurveyMonkey®. Paper copies of the survey were also made available and entered electronically by JCRPD staff. A total of 763 surveys were completed from October 31 to December 12, 2012, approximately double the amount completed for the 2005 Master Plan. The majority of the surveys were completed by residents of the District of Cullowhee (40.6%), followed by the Districts of Sylva/Webster (37.9%), Dillsboro/Qualla (12.6%), and Cashiers/Glenville (8.9%), respectively.

Several figures are shown that convey the charted responses to several key questions pertaining to existing services and facilities, proposed services and facilities, and support of funding. Over 90% of participants perceive the need for new recreation facilities for Jackson County as extremely important or important. Select questions from the survey are charted below relative to the responses in three figures (Figure 1.1-Figure 1.3).

**Figure 1.1 Which facilities or improvements would you be most willing to support funding?**



Jackson County Recreation Master Plan Update (2013)

Fig 1.2 Do you believe Jackson County needs more of these facilities?

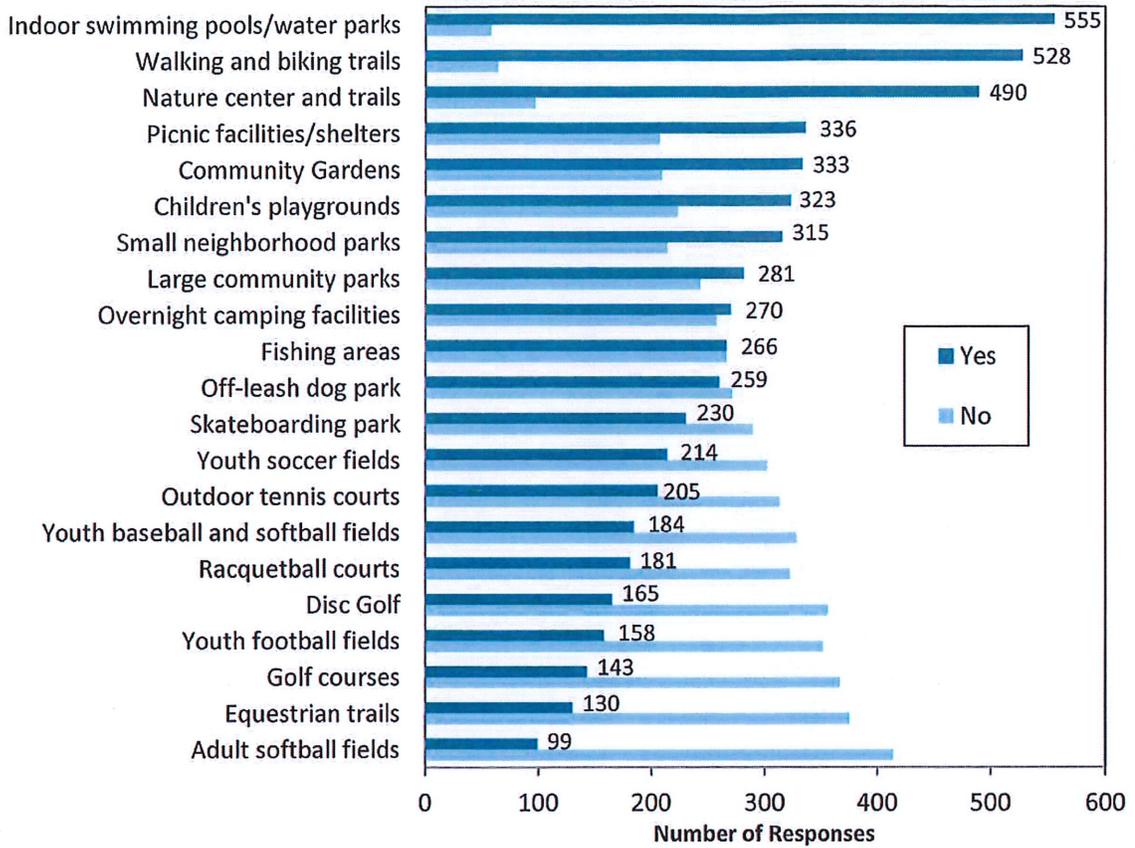
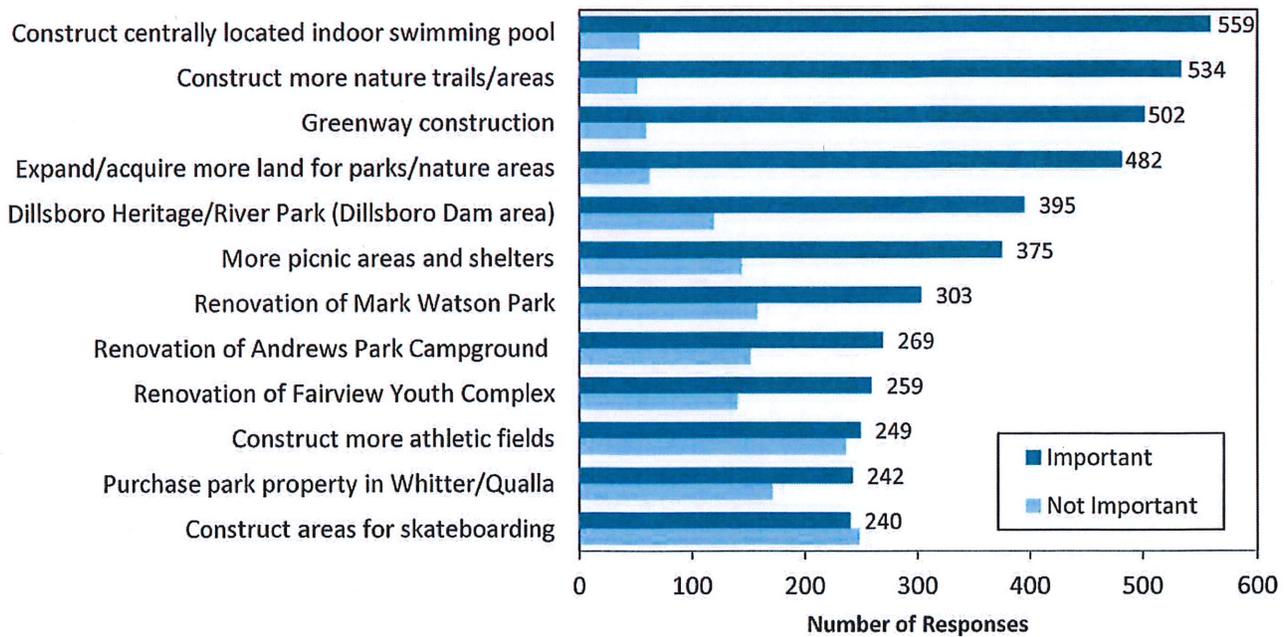


Figure 1.3 In your opinion, how important are the following potential parks and recreation improvements?



A complete list of all survey questions and responses is available in the Appendix. The general comment section, however, could not be charted due to the variety of responses. A “word cloud” has been used to display the most common themes present in the write-in comments, with the size of the word relative to the frequency it was mentioned (See Figure 1.4). The most common theme in the general comments question of the summary was an indoor pool, with 28% of all comments supporting the addition of an indoor pool to the JCRPD. Support of greenway and pedestrian connections accounted for 14% of the comments, while other most commented on were general upgrades and improvements to existing facilities and programs (12%), and the development of a river park (9%).

**Figure 1.4 General Comment Word Cloud** (comments recorded in the public survey “general comments” section were used to create word cloud shown below)

