

Appendix A: Steering Committee and Focus Group Meeting Notes

# Steering Committee Meetings

Wake County Park Kick off Meeting

Meeting Notes

March 4, 2015

Blue Jay Point

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## Introductions – Chris Snow Eric Staehle

- Why are we here: To update each of the park master plans; A primary recommendation of the Comprehensive Park master plan was to update each of the Master plans.
- Went through extensive RFQ process & review
- Established Project team and Steering Committee
- 6 month timeline
- Introduction of consultant team

(14 committee present- See attached attendance sheet)

## Committee Introductions:

**Phillip Woodward Access-** Department of health and human services travel guide on accessible places in NC- goal of involvement is to include people of all abilities.

**Kelli Braunbach-** Facility management of all county facilities- look at right balance of growth (staff, space, etc.) provide something that is manageable, implement it wisely and incrementally.

**Tracy Howe YMCA-** COO greater triangle- health and wellness and collaboration with parks important part of that process, childhood obesity- positive facilitated process, open and honest and STRATEGICALLY presented plan to move forward

**Terri Luke-** Library System- County wide facility partnerships; how can they do a better job for customers and also help libraries- what can we do to make parks a better place for customers?

**Eric S.-** Project PM, Wake County Facilities, excited to be working on parks- critical element is to be able to listen so he can reach out County wide as a part of this process. Wants to ensure a well facilitated process that can be executed, phased, and understood.

**Matt Roylance,** Deputy PROS Director, excited about what we can do with existing parks to make them more attractive. We want to get input from outside of staff perspective, vision for what parks should be and that the community gets excited about.

**Sara Williamson Baker-** Communications office- what does County look like through growth and make sure we get great public engagement in this process, having something that we can do and the public will be happy with.

**Kenneth Withrow,** CAMPO- how can we improve travel in County/Bike Ped. important, extensive system in this area, success would be to continue this trail growth in the County. Compared to Atlanta as far as loop system.

**Dianne Sauer-** City of Raleigh Parks & Rec. Director, happy to be here because of common threads and that all parks work together. County Commissioner approval, public engagement is key to success and making sure users have a voice and is implementable. Not just pretty pictures but has goals and steps to be used.

**Chris Snow-** Director of PROS County- Critical element is to recognize how much the County has changed, the transition of land use, and who is using it. Need to position County for what is coming next, ensure recommendations are implementable, and in partnership with those committee members.

**Robert Hinson-** Historical perspective of parks, getting diversity of ideas and input from a good cross section within the County. Successful product that will stir interest in the community to improve existing facilities, and maybe identify need for new parks. Spark interest. Allow natural resources present help dictate uses on land.

**Tim Malony –** Planning development and inspections. Long History with parks, 1 million people in August, 4<sup>th</sup> largest County in US. Need to meet the demand of the residents and demographics present. Reach out to stakeholders and complement our municipal services. Realistic solutions that the County move forward with.

**Greg Johnson- Zebulon-** Lifelong user of parks, manage parks in Zebulon. Make the parks even more welcoming to all families, seniors, adults, etc.

**Jason Horton-** Community Services- parks libraries, etc. undergrad in Parks and Rec and then public administration. Parks mean something different to many different people, what are the elements that are more suitable to County Parks?

**Jenn Beedle-** RRS- Serves as Wake County liaison to the State for PARTF and also provide technical assistance for outreach. Partnership and communication through all organizations. User satisfaction would be a great measure of success.

**Loren Gold -**Greater Raleigh CVB- Visitation is key; how do we drive more of our visitors in great outdoors all municipalities are important in this process. Open Space and Parks are part of the rebranding. Youth and Athletics huge but feel strong about live work play piece. Inventory of where growth is going. Helping craft the plan is very important so it can help visitors and the plan is realistic.

## Chris Snow- Background-

- Mission statement on website is most up to date – 33 staff (Look and handout -confirm mission statement with County it's different than website)
- 1 of 14 parks and recreation providers in the County – position themselves to provide recreational needs.
- Parks and recreation agency since 1976 without parks and they were a grant and aid department and transitioned to school parks improving school campuses above what was required.
- It then transitioned into County Parks
- Picked up Open Space Program, ATT, Existing Parks
- Core Services Review
- School User Groups
- The 2008 Plan was the first plan to be completed by an outside consultant



- Review of the Goals- Resource based parks, (no gyms, active fields, etc.) want to allow users access to natural resources. Do not want to compete with the municipalities in services.
- Buildings, cleaning products, etc. environmentally sensitive
- Aging Seniors, obesity youth population, allow people to know what is provided
- What are we counting and why, how can we measure services and well are we doing. Visitor survey. Latest Survey was from November 2013- result in Feb. 2014
- Been a long time since Wake County has built a new facilities.
- 30% of land protected as open space (about 1/3 has been achieved)
- Connectivity County wide for recreation, transportation.

#### What core goals do you think we need to follow for this project?

- Condition assessments are done each year- can we get that format and reviews
- Connectivity to each park in some form OTHER than the automobile
- (Q) why resource based – (A) do not duplicate or compete
- Are we identifying gaps in active recreation in municipalities?
- Marketing of Park System
- What parks are provided nearby and how are those parks being used?
- What kind of parks do we want to be? What are the non- negotiables?
  - A lot of the current parks are partnerships that are governed by other partners and agencies.
- Resource oriented parks- if the resource allows active recreation then it may be considered, however, if the resource it harmed, the use would not be allowed.
- Partnership for programs

#### Melissa presented the Live, Work, play draft, what it is comprised of and why we use it as part of the analysis.

- Overview of Boards/maps/LWP and equity
- We will look at context

#### Planning process Review

- Data Collection
- Mapping data collection
- Reading of past plans
- Understanding who people are- one site interviews with staff, what is important to ask
- Focus groups, intercept surveys
- Input, ideas, sketches, refine, input, etc.

#### Melissa discussed Communication overview (doodle Google)

#### Additional review items

- Park Condition Assessments
- Access North Carolina
- User satisfaction survey by NCSU

#### Public input- what do we want to know and who do want to talk to?

- User satisfaction
- How far are people willing to travel to the park (service depended)
- What do people want?
- HOW did they get to the park
- Where do people live or work that are using parks (geocode)
- Do they come to park with group, individual, etc?
- What challenges users faces when using facilities
- If you are not coming why are you not coming
- Bus access, how can people get to the park
- Marketing, how are people gaining information on parks currently
- Parking wayfinding, lighting, etc. support items
- Safety?
- USACE (stakeholder interviews- park specific)
- On-line survey (mind mixer)
- On-line presence (best option with Raleigh plan)
- On-line mapping plan (question with point and line data)

#### Break- then meet to review park maps as an overview

- Broke into groups with 2 parks at each table to conduct a preliminary review process. Each park table had the existing conditions draft map, previous master plans if completed, and an evaluation sheet. Groups completed preliminary review and presented discussion topics.
  - Time limited, will need follow up

#### Next Steps:

- Committee review of the park evaluation matrix
- Input from Committee on Public preference images
- Follow up to facility reviews and committee perspectives of each of the sites
- Consultant team to conduct staff interviews and conduct facilities inventory
- Refine exiting conditions of park trails and community trails nearby and leading to and from
- Obtain user satisfaction surveys for each of the Parks from the County
- Consultant team obtain condition assessments for each of the parks that are done each year.

**Wake County Parks and Recreation Master Plan**  
 April 20, 2015 Committee Meeting Minutes  
 Historic Yates Mill Pond Park

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

- Sarah Williamson
- Eric Staehle
- Matt Roylanre
- Chris Snow
- Philip Woodward
- Greg Johnson
- Kenneth Withrow
- Loren Gold
- Jenn Beedle
- Kelli Braunbach

**Project Update:**

- Field work in progress
- Greenway trails will be defined as those with human access only
- Organized trails by existing and proposed
- Started meeting with park directors and municipalities to understand if there is something a county park can provide in a local setting
- Reviewed community survey (see executive summary and survey highlights) and distilled the pertinent information from the customer satisfaction survey
- Staff interviews will be conducted after field review is complete

**Group Activity**

- Committee members broke into teams and reviewed each park separately to review survey data, field maps, and park information. Committee members reviewed all of the data and went through an exercise to provide comments per site.
- Each team developed the top three opportunities and challenges for each park:
  - **Blue Jay Point County Park**
    - Opportunities:
      - Gateway signage/clear entryway
      - Boat ramp/docking for lake access to park
      - Highlight the rope course; huge attraction with private marketing; leverage their marketing efforts to promote entire county system
      - Enhance and promote natural area playground
      - Mountain to Sea trail should be promoted
      - Programming offered to people with disabilities
    - Challenges:
      - Driving to the park can be difficult
      - Mountain biking policy?
      - Marketing efforts
  - **North Wake Landfill District Park**
    - Opportunities:
      - Best view in Wake County, great marketing opportunity

Item	Project	Priority	Organization	Staff	Meeting 12/10	Meeting 4/3
<b>ALTERNATE TEAM</b>						
Matt Roylanre	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake HCC - PM / PA	Yes	Yes	✓
Eric Staehle	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake HCC - PM / PA	Yes	Yes	✓
Chris Snow	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake HCC - PM / PA	Yes	Yes	✓
Philip Woodward	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake HCC - PM / PA	Yes	Yes	✓
Greg Johnson	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake HCC - PM / PA	Yes	Yes	✓
Kenneth Withrow	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake HCC - PM / PA	Yes	Yes	✓
Loren Gold	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake HCC - PM / PA	Yes	Yes	✓
Jenn Beedle	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake HCC - PM / PA	Yes	Yes	✓
Kelli Braunbach	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake HCC - PM / PA	Yes	Yes	✓
<b>PROJECT TEAM</b>						
Eric Staehle	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake HCC - PM / PA	Yes	Yes	✓
Chris Snow	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake HCC - PM / PA	Yes	Yes	✓
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Kelli Braunbach	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake HCC - PM / PA	Yes	Yes	✓
<b>STERING COMMITTEE</b>						
Project Director	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Manager	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Coordinator	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Support	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Liaison	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Advisor	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Sponsor	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Champion	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Stakeholder	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Reviewer	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Approver	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Sign-off	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Closeout	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Evaluation	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Reporting	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Archiving	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓
Project Termination	Wake County Parks and Recreation	919-988-4389	Wake County Parks and Recreation	Yes	Yes	✓

*Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau*



- School will provide a lot of programming opportunity and park exposure—recycling, environmental, waste management, community project example
- Re-using the landfill for recreation
- Challenges:
  - Name doesn't give a good impression of the park or represent what is there; name was dictated by County board
  - No permanent staff present, no significant programming.
  - Public transportation connections are tough, CAT bus stop far
- **Lake Crabtree County Park**
  - Opportunities:
    - Well-loved park by the community! Appeals to a huge spectrum of ages and abilities
    - Outreach and awareness of programs—education programs seem low on the spectrum of user survey; Online registration program!
    - Connect to Umstead Park and the Black Creek Greenway in Cary; soon to be connected to Morrisville
    - Paddle board rental new addition!
    - Awareness to water quality
    - Uniformity in marketing—brochures should have a color coded message that applies system wide
  - Challenges:
    - Staff has trouble understanding cross cultural recreation needs
    - RDU authority relationship
    - PCB issues and liability—prohibits swimming
- **Historic Oak View County Park**
  - Opportunities:
    - Structured Play, highlight historic element; how people played in the periods could be represented; Things kids can touch
    - Cross promotion between two historic parks? If you like Oak View, check out Yates Mill
    - Branding/PR/Uniformity in signage and brochures (survey doesn't show heavy website usage for marketing) Social Media!
  - Challenges:
    - Is it appealing to non-school users? How to attract other daily users; least visited according to user survey, but annual visitors were really high
    - ADA access could be improved
    - Surrounding land property; a lot of County owned property but not connected to the park
- **Historic Yates Mill County Park**
  - Opportunities:
    - Recreation: fishing and canoeing
    - Cross promoting with farm animal education with NCSU
    - Deaf programming, services for people with disabilities; When you leave the education center it's accessible but turns to grass limiting access

- Rental venue (internal policy focuses on the mission of the park—staff isn't set up for true corporate retreats)
- Challenges:
  - Public transportation
  - Parking, overflow field on the right can be used
- **Crowder District Park**
  - Opportunities:
    - Individual marketing, survey shows driving by
    - Located in dense area of County; well-loved park, high usage
    - YMCA of Triangle close by, potential program partnership
    - Potential for additional land acquisition (would double acreage) for green space/natural area
  - Challenges:
    - Ten-Ten Road, high traffic volume and high speed; could provide bike/ped access if improved
- **American Tobacco Trail**
  - Opportunities:
    - White Oak Creek connection will create connection from Downtown Durham to Raleigh via Walnut Creek and then access to Neuse River Trail (Huge regional connectivity to be embraced!)
    - Major destination for cyclists across the state, country
  - Challenges:
    - Rest area accommodations, water breaks
    - Lighting along the trail for commuting (Dawn to dusk policy)
    - Define destinations with wayfinding signage to Cary, Apex, Holly Springs, Raleigh
    - Safety from user conflict (bad reputation for crime)
    - Bike/ped connectivity with trail spurs to developments to convert vehicular trips to the trail to bike/ped
- **Harris Lake County Park**
  - Opportunities:
    - West side of the property could be activated
    - Corporate retreat center?
    - Strong greenway connections from the park
  - Challenges:
    - What does the future hold with Duke Energy expansion? If expand, lake level will rise 20ft vertically and cut park property in half
      - Develop a risk line based on expansion and contour lines

**General Notes/Comments:**

- What is the mission of each park? When was the last time they were updated? Do they align with community expectation for each park?
  - Next meeting the mission statements should be reviewed; Review with park director during interviews
- No vision statement for each park. Staff attempted in 2014, but nothing created
- System wide PR and outreach needs to be streamlined and updated
  - Brochures should have the same look, feel and content

- Photography policy asks that people check in and acknowledge the rules for each park; free registration for yearly badge; targets professional photographers (City of Raleigh charges, but wake county hasn't tried that route)
- Wake County accessibility audit is in progress; detailed for lake crabtree park, prior to 88; next park is Blue Jay Point; A few years ago there was a facility review but not into details
- As conducting field work, provide feedback on accessibility

**Alta/Sage To-do List:**

- Send links to specific documents committee members need to review
- Resend link to running comment sheet to continue conversation
- Review mission statement for each park
- Update GIS data on ATT map
- Ask CAMPO for funded LAPP bike/ped projects in Wake County

**Wake County Staff comments and To-do List:**

- Send mission statement for each park
- Send schematic drawing of Lake Crabtree, boat launch accessibility review report in progress
- Mountain bike trail master plan for Harris Lake, to be complete in next few weeks
- Working on conceptual schematic plan; Playground at Oakview, historic farm theme; preliminary review; expand parking; towards the amphitheater but closer to the park
- ATT Wimberly Rd parking lot expansion plus water facilities in partnership with Cary and Apex; no timeframe, will be at least two years out
- Send a copy of the CLH water study for ATT, Wimberly ranked the highest
- Define the three acre lease area for Blue Jay—Chis to send
- Blue Jay has major paving job this summer, maintenance improvements
- ATT crossing project to widen the crossing—changing the gate system; getting ready to bid for construction
- Amberly direct access to ATT from subdivision
- Church in Cary to add three access points; Church was to be an ATT trailhead; Erick to send plans and copperleaf development
- System map in all parks; market in both county and local parks
- Rgreenway app for county?
- Marketing focus group and invite communication staff from Cary, Raleigh, Apex, and County
- ATT close to beating Crabtree as the single most visited park in Wake County
- Staff interviews are a little more detailed and in the weeds since they know the park the best; give them enough of a heads-up as possible; send questions first and then have a follow-up interview; Every park has a wish list, x or y;
- TTA stop at Crabtree?
- CAT stop at N. Wake Landfill

	Name	Email	04/21/15 PROS-MTB2
1.	Sarah Williamson	sarah.williamson@wake.gov	2 wake.gov.co
2.	Eric Stachle		
3.	Matt Roylance		
4.	Chris Snow		
5.	Philip Woodward	philip.woodward@dhhs.nc.gov	
6.	Greg Johnson	gjohnson@townofcelanov.org	
7.	Kenneth W. Withrow	kenneth.withrow@Campo-nc.us	
8.	Loen Gold	lgold@visitraleigh.com	
9.	Jenn Beedle	jbeedle@ncso.edu	
10.	Kelli Braumbach	kbraumbach@wakegov.com	
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			



# Focus Groups

## American Tobacco Trail Focus Group

June 29th, 2015

### Welcome

Thank you for participating in this focus group. Your input is key to the success of the future of the County Parks and Recreation System. Please be open, honest, and respectful of your fellow participants. This focus group will last approximately one hour.

### Agenda

10 minutes Welcome and Introductions

*Please share your name, organization, and why you are interested in participating.*

- Leslie Kennedy- equestrian representative for trail, lives right next to trail; instrumental in working with the County and NCDOT to extend ATT past Hwy 64, has seen evolution of trail & its use, email address: ljken73@gmail.com

15 minutes Park Overview

*What do you feel the role of county parks is for residents? For the group you represent?*

- Maintaining/managing trail
- 3 counties should work together to make it as cohesive as possible, same rules & regs as move along trail
- Don't need to distinguish which county is managing which section if all coordinated effort
- Getting word out to residents of the county is important so they know of parks & use them more.
- ATT: word of mouth gets plenty of people on trail.
  - o People look it up online when moving to area or looking for a trail.
  - o Most know about the wake county section b/c it's so unique.
  - o Marketing & news articles should include horseback riding; often doesn't mention it, which is disappointing.
  - o Opportunity to celebrate & market ATT more as an equestrian trail- very limited facility type in the Triangle.

*Review of existing brochure, existing map, context of the park, user survey responses, site analysis, equity analysis.*

15 minutes Evaluation of Use

*What is working well? What is not working well? What could we do to enhance visitor experience at the park? What could we do to provide better access to the park? How can*

*we increase awareness of this park? What makes, or would make you come to the park (more) frequently?*

- Parking fills up quickly and sometimes blocks trailer access
- Bikes zipping by scare the horses
- The signs to let horses exit tunnel help cut down on user conflict
- The trail surface is great in Wake Co!
  - o Seems like there is always pressure to pave trail for bikes (Christina: just received a call about paving it)
  - o Plenty of paved trails in area- its' nice to have an unpaved/natural trail
  - o Equestrians don't want to see the trail paved—it would eliminate equestrian use. The natural trail next to pavement is too narrow for horses, bikes fly by & scare horses, room for single-file only
- Amenities wish list:
  - o Water!
  - o Hitching posts near bathrooms
  - o Lighting: no strong preference, as long as lights aren't disruptive to neighboring homeowners
  - o Parking/trailer access could be better
    - Designated trailer parking with signs?
    - Equestrians know weekends, summer are busy; tend to come during weekdays & winter
    - Overflow parking lot doesn't get used much- rest of areas will be full & overflow empty, in spite of signs, but once a car parks there, more will join
    - Expanding parking lot on Wimberly Rd- and possibly adding water at same spot!
  - o More garbage cans, more than just at the parking lots- people toss trash, dog waste bags, water bottles, etc, on and along trail

10 minutes Key Outcomes and Closing

*Discuss key outcomes of the focus group. What are the top three takeaways?*

### Misc Notes:

- Staff providing grocery bags for distribution in place of pet waste bags; no budget for buying bags
- Horse waste: volunteer goes once per week to clean up horse waste (was twice weekly before and prior to events, but not necessary) – toss in woods. Not many complaints- not much waste on trails. Volunteers do Wake Co only (up to New Hope)
- Great to have additional (neighborhood) connections to trail



## Blue Jay Point County Park Focus Group

June 30th, 2015

### Welcome

Thank you for participating in this focus group. Your input is key to the success of the future of the County Parks and Recreation System. Please be open, honest, and respectful of your fellow participants. This focus group will last approximately one hour.

### Agenda

10 minutes Welcome and Introductions

*Please share your name, organization, and why you are interested in participating.*

- Chip – Go Ape, great relationship between Go Ape & park
- Bailey – loves trails (child)
- Austin Branch – finley YMCA- loves running camp Blazin’ trails, unique opportunity
- Jeff Brewer- neighbor, leading effort to maintain MST in area
- Matt– leads LaCrosse group (elem kids)- loves staff
- Cheryl Stevens- 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Franciscan School- loves bringing kids in art classes to do things they’ve never done
- Deborah Filer- open space mgr, former mgr of BJP- favorite is hiking upper barton creek trail b/c one of most challenging and most peaceful
- Ben– park mgr at BJP, loves being able to offer a bit of everything to users- educational experiences, solitude, passive recreation
- D’Nise Heffner – asst programs director- loves that this is perfectly typical piedmont habitat environment, so teaching people about what’s here shows them what’s in their backyard
- Stephany – former employee, now a frequent visitor; loves most that it’s here, garden & ponds

15 minutes Park Overview

*What do you feel the role of county parks is for residents? For the group you represent?*

- Lack of education on the differences between county parks vs municipal or state parks
- Cover bigger areas- outside city limits at start so more easily able to be a natural area with some recreation vs city parks that are oriented toward active recreations
- BJP marketing:
  - Enewsletters, fb, calendars, spend huge amount of time letting people know park is here
  - Passive recreation park: more outdoorsy/rustic than traditional muni park
  - If want to draw more people, would need to open up more recreational opportunities (e.g., turning some trails into mountain bike trails)

- Park signs on Six Forks Rd/Highway 98 not overly visible & are easy to pass before realizing it’s there
- Can leverage Go Ape marketing to drive foot traffic with less impact/work for County staff
- Appreciate fact that there aren’t mtn bike trails. Focus kids on each other & being outside. Like that the lodge is separated from fields and active recreation areas

*Review of existing brochure, existing map, context of the park, user survey responses, site analysis, equity analysis.*

10 minutes Mission

*Is the park representative of the mission statement? Should the mission statement change? Should the park be modified to fulfill the mission?*

- Doesn’t mention recreation & a component of the park is recreation based.
- Important to keep nature in mission statement b/c this isn’t a manicured field.
- Seems park is living up to mission statement. Easy to see environmental education in natural setting.
- If recreation isn’t the purpose of BJP, do we want to go that way with it?
- Turning blind eye to part of what park is all about- playground, lacrosse fields, Go Ape, etc- half of park being used in a different way than mission statement indicates.
- If add recreation to mission statement, then changes should ensue (e.g., updating lacrosse field): must add objectives and goals to live up to it.
- Dissenting opinion: adding rec to mission statement isn’t a guarantee of providing a certain LOS.

15 minutes Evaluation of Use

*What is working well? What is not working well? What could we do to enhance visitor experience at the park? What could we do to provide better access to the park? How can we increase awareness of this park? What makes, or would make you come to the park (more) frequently?*

- Like having recreation & natural education/amenities separate b/c solitude & peace not possible right next to recreation.
- Dissenting opinion that it’s not necessary to have park split up between recreation & natural space
- Unlimited budget/wish list:
  - Paved parking lot to give users a more professional appeal when coming to Go Ape
  - Better water access – an easy way to get a kayak into the water (not motorized/boat ramp, but not hauling a kayak a mile)
  - Fishing pier
  - Parking lot can be unsafe loading groups of kids; carpool loop would be helpful





- Redo playground into natural playground with trees & shade (not a fan of sails)
- Low impact, leave-no-trace camping would fill 20-mile gap between Shin Leaf & the dam along MTS- doesn't need to be extensive (permit basis?)
- Upgrade turf on main field- lacrosse requires good grass, even field- no equivalent to Cedar Falls in this area, high demand for existing fields & facilities- would allow field to serve as true athletic field rather than something volunteers do their best to make work
- Astronomy/telescope area: BJP is a good place to see night sky without light pollution from city
- Natural play area expanded to include water features, larger area, fenced in and professionally done
- More natural resource mgt: BJP has beautiful stand of short leaf pine which is unique & native & which will not survive succession- would like it preserved
- More staff
- Office building expanded. Education staff has no break room b/c has been converted into office space. Would love to provide for them a place to get away from work/public during breaks.
- Another/more sectioned off outdoor learning space.
- Classroom with a play patio for preschoolers- large portion of educational groups; Could also be used for coaches to rent & use for classroom trainings, especially when rained out
- Large (200-250 person) picnic shelter: good for corporate trainings/retreats, YMCA & Blazing Trails, weekends for regular park visitors, good for school groups to use as base of operations/shelter in bad weather, teams can use for rain-outs, would put off BJP trail beyond where Go Ape building will be (comes with restrooms, grounded, possibly fireplace, storage, work space- YMCA in Cary has facility that could be used as example)
- Parking adequate- rarely not enough, schedule accordingly for lacrosse
- Bathrooms- adequate, Go Ape wants 100 yards closer
- Park serving the community's needs as-is
- Former dumping grounds for homesteads that Go Ape & others have been clearing & helping fix up; would like to continue those efforts
- Leadership training & team building require classroom space. Currently goes somewhere else, but would be great to use facility here (currently classrooms are prioritized for environmental education & not readily accessible for corporate groups or sports teams)
- Go Ape bringing through an average of 1 business group per day (portion of their revenue goes to wake county- not specifically earmarked for BJP but tracked as Go Ape funds)
- Opportunity for more MTS signs to help park users know it's there
- Current trail maps are being used
- Mobile app can be good but some areas don't have cell service – needed to stay current & provide better access to park info

## Historic Oak View County Park Focus Group – 6/9/15

### Welcome and Introduction

Everyone introduced themselves and stated what they loved most about the park:

- Janet – great staff, cotton gin history
- Mike – new trails
- Debbie – new trails
- Marty – goats
- Betsy – house and cemetery
- Josh – education department, impact on students who come
- Matt – working at the park
- Matt – tenant house
- Emily – continuously enjoyable and opportunities to make an impact

### Park Overview

- The role of county parks vs. local parks
  - Historically different purpose, local parks tend to be smaller, county parks tend to be larger with large scale recreational opportunities
  - County parks serve areas that don't have local parks
  - Users don't care about the difference
  - People come for something to do together as a family
- Marketing:
  - Spokesgoat/person, mascot
  - Brochures are guides, not marketing pieces
  - Website, social media for engagement
    - Website is static, not that informative, maybe move info from brochure onto website to make more dynamic
    - Spend more energy on the website – spruce up framework to have a larger conversation
    - Park has a very active facebook page, used to engage public and share programming and event info
  - Brochures are marketing for people who are already aware of the park
  - Name of park is not descriptive – add farm center, historic property, more descriptive title to draw people in
    - Historic Oak View Farm County Park
  - Usage – “I didn't know this park was here” “had a hard time finding this”
    - No front entrance sign, doesn't say park name, needs better wayfinding
    - Once people find park, they come back – young families
    - Users tend to be the people who work in the area over people who live here
    - Don't have trouble filling programs but instead need to grow daily visitation
  - Access – everyone is driving, no biking or walking because its not accessible



**Mission**

- Wordy, not catchy, lots of commas, get rid of first part and start at Historic Oak
  - Very broad, geographically incorrect
- Good key words – agricultural heritage, recreational opportunities, exhibits, events, education, piedmont NC,
  - Not sure about “passive recreation”, what does that really mean?

**Evaluation of Use**

- What’s working well?
  - New trails- 2 new loops totaling a mile
  - Goats – want to add more animals, living working farm
    - Mules, chickens, more goats, feasible chicken run
- What can be improved on?
  - Amphitheatre not used, doesn’t fit into program, takes you away from main part of park
  - Need a second maintenance staff member
  - Parking for events is a challenge, better than other parks (shuttles, free), not enough parking within park
    - No clear parking signs for day users, not always intuitive, can’t see visitors center from entrance way
    - Need a visitor center sign
- Access – sidewalk across street, link trails to City of Raleigh greenways, crabtree or neuse river;
- Add trail connectors into office park
  - Potential for a walking entrance from sidewalk on Poole road for direct park access

**Key Outcomes and Closing**

- If there was an unlimited budget, what would you add?
  - Playground with a farm theme; creates an all day experience
  - More out buildings - chicken coup, well house, smoke house, farm related buildings, working cotton gin house
  - More animals and staff: Park Technician for Operations
  - Playground, animals, staff - increasing visitation
  - Become a working farm – add mule and chickens
    - Already have the barn, stalls in paddock,
    - Find a mule that’s good with goats and children
    - Means more responsibility for part time staff on weekends
  - Finish permanent exhibits in buildings and each house. Redo exhibits in visitor building
    - Already have concepts and plans for new exhibits, just need funding
- Programming
  - Strong part of the park, no big picture changes or requests from patrons
  - Offering more on recreational programs – new fishing programs going well
- Park Board started as steering committee and became board, began early 1980’s

**Historic Yates Mill County Park Focus Group – 6/17/15****Welcome and Introduction**

- Jill Adams, YMA
- Gary Hunter, YMA
- Herb Euting, YMA
- Carolyn Solomon, YMA
- Rebecca Cope, Wake County

**Park Overview**

- There’s a need for a county wide policies manual – evacuations, photographers, hours, dogs, events, etc.
  - Accessible to staff - emergency action plan?
- The existing master plan should be available on-line for public review
- The role of county parks vs. local, city or state
  - Need to change the thought that just because people pay taxes, there should be no park free
  - Each partner should support the others—financially, volunteers/staff (YMA, Wake County, NCSU)
  - Different rules for different parks, Yates Mill is only park that doesn’t allow dogs
  - Need better directed **marketing** effort to schools near park for programming and educational opportunities
- Marketing
  - People don’t know its here
  - People see ads on public tv, pictures in paper—that will bring people to the park
  - Make website more interactive, tourism sites, chamber of commerce
    - Add content so that people don’t have to click on the brochure for the information about each park
  - This is a historic park – specify how each park is different,
    - where you can go with dogs and where you can’t
      - Add the reason/explanation of why we don’t allow dogs (wildlife refuge)
  - Broader marketing to bring in broader type of people, historic buffs
    - Public doesn’t understand why they have to charge for some events
    - Require schools to take tour to maintain finances—don’t give them a free option

**Mission**

- Longer version mentions stewardship and **partnerships** (unique feature of this park)
- Mission statement should be added to the webpage

**Evaluation of Use**



- Access to mill is important, and it is currently straightforward and easy to access
- You have to know about the trails to find them
- People should come to the park center before going to the mill; Would require changes to the trail system to funnel through the center
  - Photographers will register, learn about the park and its programs
  - Monitor who goes to mill, keep an eye on groups,
- Register on historic properties?
- Need directional signs on Lake Wheeler Road (brown street signs)
  - Signs on fence are not visible
- Add a playground?
  - Parking issue, what's the point for this park? doesn't add value to this park
  - May attract more day users
  - Will change the current atmosphere of the park, add noise
- Repeat bird watchers, fishers, painters, photographers
  - Benefits to being a calm park in drawing people back
- The mill typically is a one time use, don't see a lot of repeat tour groups
- Currently the play area for kids, library, provide other ways to attract kids without having a playground
- Day users come mainly to use walking trails
  - They could use improvement, rough terrain, needs better signage
  - Paving would make it handicap accessible but no longer be "hiking" trails
- Close relationship with Crowder Park?
  - For shelter, playground, dogs—is there a need to recreate that at Yates Mill?

#### Key Outcomes and Closing

If you had an unlimited budget and the political will, what would you change to the physical layout of the park?

- Add more land
  - Preservation, refuge, do more for the trail system
  - Add a store, shelter, parking
- A way to **add shelters** for reunions and meetings, brings different types of visitors to the park
  - Will need to address parking issues
- Need more volunteers for the mill, all programs should include a tour (for school groups)
  - Better marketing to get the word out
- Mill Tour Hours: people need to know the hours, are often turned away
  - Can't have an open door policy—it's a protected, historic property
- Mill handicap ramp to provide access for visitors of all abilities
  - Is there a way to do this without impacting the historical integrity?
- Make professional photographers register and pay a fee

## Lake Crabtree County Park Focus Group - 6/9/15

### Welcome and Introductions

- What people love most about park:
  - Trail system
  - Overall relaxed atmosphere
  - Diversity of what is available
  - Accessibility to so many people in area
  - Staff and sunsets
  - Diversity and accessibility, picnic
  - Amenities, training opportunities
  - Adapted accessibility, the team/staff make people feel welcome
  - No motors on water policy

### Park Overview

- County parks should provide?
  - Opportunities for healthy recreation and reflection
  - County is more inclusive, everyone in the county treated equally
  - Preservation of natural space in middle of developing area, place to enjoy trails and nature the way it used to be
  - Enjoy a natural setting, provide diversity
- Park Marketing:
  - Online doesn't mean much, it's more important to hear a recommendation from friends or people you know – don't put a lot of weight on printed material
  - Website is important for people to learn about the park, rules, facilities – forums on the website, trail reports
  - Web over brochures; important to include clubs and privately run activities and volunteer opportunities – link new comers to local clubs
  - Brochures not a tool to bring people to park, just to introduce once they are here and provide great maps
  - Raleigh CAC structure – develop park group that gets to together and discuss events and opportunities at park
  - Brochure pictures could show more user diversity: wheelchair fisherman, blind walker on trail, etc.
- Trail Signage: closed or open trail announcements, signs needed at trail intersections, more maps on trail, paths aren't one direction
- Need site line pruning along trails.
- Park Usage:
  - Maintaining interest in park does not necessarily mean that levels of visitors increase but attracting different types of users.
  - Park is not yet at capacity, although sometimes the trails feel overcrowded
  - Bigger user numbers mean bigger influence, money, resources, opportunities
- Bathrooms
  - Not yet accessible - rental bathrooms first, then day use, then boat ramp

**Mission**

- Mission statement is missing an educational component
- Draft: To serve the growing needs of all Wake County residents by having leisure, recreational, and education programs available in a natural setting

**Evaluation of Use**

- What is missing or needs improvement?
  - Greenway connectivity around the area, especially to Umstead State Park
  - Ability to access park via bike
  - Signs saying user skills required for different trails
- Boat ramp – concrete ramp in cove –
  - Accessible dock improvements coming July 1
  - Shelter area, no winds so good place to start
    - Bad logistics – no bathroom, floodplain
- What's working well:
  - Parking for different uses of the park is spread out
- Not working well
  - Need a parking lot in the back (towards Cary)

**Key Outcomes and Closing**

- If budget was no issues, what would you add to the park?
  - Assuming we have an accessible dock – add an accessible tree house to make it truly A family friendly park
  - Wind, something to do to make other areas of the lake easier to sail model boats – current location makes it difficult
  - Protect the park and surrounding areas, make area bigger and easier to use freely
  - Trails: add more terrain and a beginners area,
    - If too much catering towards beginners, lose community involvement of higher level
    - Would be great to add at least a short beginner loop, within larger intermediate park – better signage to make people aware of where to go for which experience
  - Dredging (bird island) to provide better access for long stretches of rowing
    - Expand area closer to parkway entrance, share docks
  - Love that there are no motorboats on lake – please don't change that!

**North Wake Landfill District Park Focus Group**

June 30th, 2015

**Welcome**

Thank you for participating in this focus group. Your input is key to the success of the future of the County Parks and Recreation System. Please be open, honest, and respectful of your fellow participants. This focus group will last approximately one hour.

**Agenda**

10 minutes Welcome and Introductions

*Please share your name, organization, and why you are interested in participating.*

- Johnny—Solid Waste, worked for landfill/park for 30 years
- Ben – Park manager at Blue Jay & N Wake; most interested in potential use for N Wake, love current amenities but think it offers a unique space for the county & adjoining neighborhoods, nice place to host events, untapped resource
- John—Solid Waste; want to make good use of something generally considered not useful; good example of what can be done
- Deborah—Open Space Manager (previous park manager), favorite is view from top of hill; like lots of good connections, thinks most people aren't aware of connections & parking available;
- Mary—Park aid at N Wake; favorite thing = repurposed landfill; like top of hill; likes to see birds using hill; likes view; lots of people in area don't know about park but those that know about it enjoy;
- D'Nise—Assistant park manager of programs for Blue Jay & N Wake; has visited site many years as resident dropping off waste; has toured facility as part of solid waste tours when was active landfill; exciting that in a fairly short time later it looks completely different. Looking forward to possible trees in the future.

15 minutes Park Overview

*What do you feel the role of county parks is for residents? For the group you represent?*

- Fit well between city/local & state parks
- Resources for events (e.g., triathlons), whereas state parks don't have staff and local parks don't have resources
- Bottom line: people don't care who is providing resource/support for park (city/county/state)
- Marketing
  - Many people who live near park don't know it's here b/c you have to look for it to find it.
  - Signs aren't visible, people driving by don't see it or notice it.





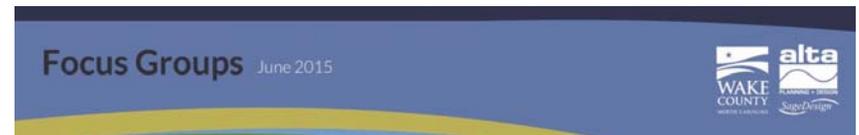
- o Perhaps exposure through schools and community center will increase use?
- o Connection to school could also help with City of Raleigh connecting through park to their greenway
- o Uniformity of Wake County signs didn't help—now parks looks the same as solid waste, landfill, etc.
- Park entrance is a driveway off the entrance to a maintenance shed instead of the maintenance shed being a driveway off the park entrance.
  - o Creates confusion
  - o Looks very industrial & uninviting
  - o People not sure who has right of way
  - o Feels "like pulling into a prison"
  - o Street name "Duponi" may need to be renamed in sections because it turns several times with the same name
- Name is officially "North Wake Landfill District Park"
  - o Confusing (is it a landfill or a park?)
  - o Unappealing
  - o While it's important to reference the history & make visitors aware of the unique & special nature of the park being built on recycled trash—the word "landfill" shouldn't be in the park name
- Will always be a landfill- nature of what's there, permits, etc. Will always operate as a closed landfill- can't build/plant on hills, must monitor
- Incredible opportunity for parks and solid waste division to promote what has been built and teach about the functions that go on out there- predominantly recycling and reduction functions
- School nearby will be themed for environmental education
- Waste Mgt had active partnership with Falls River HOA for many years – not active anymore but was vital to building park

15 minutes Evaluation of Use

*What is working well? What is not working well? What could we do to enhance visitor experience at the park? What could we do to provide better access to the park? How can we increase awareness of this park? What makes, or would make you come to the park (more) frequently?*

- Users
  - o Playground is busiest part of park
  - o Big shelter- huge birthday parties (a lot) – need more trash cans/recycling
  - o Mornings: exercise groups (8-15 people meeting at park & having aerobics class on top of hill)
  - o Not many arriving by transit, even though this park has better than average transit access- comment that it's not advertised/known that park can be accessed by transit

- o Walk-ins coming off trails from neighborhoods
- o Very few mountain bikers use skills course - would increase # of users by expanding trails; Little kids on skills course more than adult mountain bikers
- o Gas to energy plant will remain, but as of Dec, operation may change that allows for more options- DTE will remain involved but county may take over operations, may open up connection through area
- o 2 sediment ponds no longer needed- can be closed or incorporated into trails; will probably need to repair risers (not failing, but not in great shape)
- o "Prospect Hill" will be difficult to grant public access: it's an unlined landfill, area is completely gated & fenced (trail is on outside)
- o Potential for trail around pond between Gas Energy Facility & Prospect Hill unlined landfill
- Wish List:
  - o Shade at the playground! Much needed- shade structures, trees (need water!)
  - o Public art at necessary fenced structures- visually appealing & exciting without affecting function, soften industrial feel, possible education opportunities, interpretive art, possible project with school next door or School of Design at NCSU
  - o Modify entrance & make it look like a park
  - o Park staff & a permanent space/office/reception area for greeting public on site- currently in trailer that's inaccessible from 7pm – 9pm (last 2 hours of park's open day) when waste services has to close their gate
  - o Need water/restrooms access (trigger annexation by City of Raleigh?)
  - o Eliminate skills course due to lack of use & repurpose the space? Not a lot of space, and not sure what else could go there besides trail; maybe people would use fitness equipment/fitness trail there (ask public)
  - o Being able to host SKs/events! Potential to develop a joint use agreement with WPSS for parking access. Picnic shelter perfect gathering point. Many requests for events. Need parking that doesn't use trails/event space as ingress/egress. Would need additional staff.
  - o Trail access/system between school/community center could draw in parents & such waiting for kids practicing on fields at school- need something that draws them in & explains what park is- interpretive trail?
  - o Education & interpretive info (& benches!) along trail going uphill to views
  - o Signage that leads people up the hill from the parking area
  - o Access up back side of hill close to playground- issues with drainage berms built into hill but would be great since people go up that side anyway; could be limited to foot traffic only that isn't paved—would need to avoid well placements (John to send CAD files)
  - o ADA access is needed so all people of all abilities can enjoy view
  - o Shade at top of hill would help- people use picnic tables; soil is 6' deep before hitting landfill liner, but small shelters for individual tables could work



- o Toilet seats would make restrooms more user friendly

Mission of North Wake Landfill District Park

No existing mission statement. Use the space below to draft a mission statement or list key words you think should be included in the mission statement.

- Buzz Words to be added:
  - o Provide recreational opportunities
  - o Educational opportunities
  - o Partnerships
  - o Stewardship
  - o Environment
  - o Greenway connections/access from neighborhoods & schools

