



Annual Report

2017
2018



RALEIGH

Parks,
Recreation and
Cultural Resources
parks.raleighnc.gov



Letter from the Director

On behalf of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department (PRCR), It is with great pleasure that we present the 2017-2018 Annual Report highlighting our many significant accomplishments over the past year.

- Our department’s vision is **bringing people to parks and parks to people**. Last fall, the Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board presented to City Council the Department’s Neighborhood and Community Connections Program (N&CC). The goal of the N&CC Program is to improve safe, walkable access to parks and greenway trails for the communities in Raleigh that are most in need of improved access and which are most vulnerable to negative health outcomes associated with lack of access to open space and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- **Dorothea Dix Park** – A Park for Everyone, Built by Everyone
In August 2017, the master plan and community engagement process kicked off for Dorothea Dix Park. Over 1,000 people attended the first two community meetings and have continued to express their excitement and passion in helping shape the future of Dix Park.
- In September 2017, the ribbon was cut at **Forest Ridge Park**. Biking and walking trails line the property, which features a welcome center, wildlife garden, two shelters, and a playground complete with a zipline. Children are encouraged to explore art and nature in the park, and staff hosts education workshops throughout the year.
- The City broke ground on **Moore Square** in November 2017, marking the start of a renovation that will transform the Square into a 21st century urban space. The project goal is to look ahead to Raleigh’s future while honoring Moore Square’s history as a signature downtown destination.
- The **Volunteer program** exceeded expectations this past year with over 150,000 volunteer hours spent assisting with park maintenance and beautification, coaching athletic teams, helping at special events and keeping our greenway trails and parks clean and safe through the Adopt-A-Trail and Adopt-A-Park programs. Thank you to the thousands of citizen volunteers who contribute their time, talents, and resources!
- Several park renovations and development projects are underway as the department works to transform land and improve facilities across Raleigh to meet the needs of our growing population.

We will continue to work hard to provide a model parks system for citizens of Raleigh to enjoy and be proud of. We are committed to maintaining our parks and facilities in a clean and safe manner, to preserving and protecting our natural environment and providing the highest quality recreation opportunities for citizens of every age and ability.

In closing, I would like to sincerely thank City Council and the citizens of Raleigh whose continued and loyal support make these accomplishments possible.

Sincerely,

Diane B. Sauer, Director

Together we connect and enrich our community through exceptional experiences.

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Park Projects

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department planned a series of pup parties in spring 2018. These included the opening of a new dog park at Buffalo Road park, celebrations all across downtown, and multiple “Pop-Pup” events at Dix Park for dogs and families to enjoy the warm weather.

Pop Up Dog Park events are part of the department’s efforts to get citizen feedback about the use and need for dog parks within the city. The department is working with the Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board to develop a strategic plan to address the growing needs for dog facilities across Raleigh and specifically in the downtown area. We are anticipating the plan completion in Fall/Winter 2018.



Pop up
Dog Parks

Dix Park

Update

The great social activist and urban reformer, Jane Jacobs once proclaimed, “Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when they are created by everybody.” We believe this to also be true of great urban parks. With the development of Dorothea Dix Park, we have the opportunity for this community to come together to build a park for everyone. A place that honors the legacy of the past, fulfills the needs of the present and leads us into the future. Dix Park is not only something for Raleigh and the Triangle but it is becoming a special place that welcomes visitors from across North Carolina. This year the park hosted a variety of programs and events including movie nights, walking tours, pop-up dog parks and concerts drawing over 25,000 attendees. In addition, the park hosted 12 volunteer events through which 227 volunteers donated over 500 hours of time to park efforts.

In August, the master plan and community engagement process kicked off. Right now, world-renowned landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburgh and a team of local and national experts are leading the development of a visionary Master Plan. Over 1,000 people attended the first two community meetings and have continued to express their excitement and passion in helping shape the future of Dix Park as we move through the planning process. The commitment and generosity of this community is inspiring.



The most important parks and public spaces in America rely on public-private partnerships to make them vibrant and successful. The effort to create Dorothea Dix Park is one of those best-practice public-private partnerships between the City of Raleigh and Dorothea Dix Park Conservancy. The City of Raleigh owns and operates Dorothea Dix Park. The Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that exists to support the City in its efforts, serve as its philanthropic partner, and help ensure the creation and long-term success of the park.

Dix Park is a place for everyone. A place to explore, connect, relax and have some fun. Over the next year, the community will work together on this once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a master plan that defines the future of Dix Park as a transformative public space for community, health, and celebration that will reflect our diverse and thriving community in North Carolina. Be a part of creating Dorothea Dix Park as a park for everyone, built by everyone.



Barwell Road Park

The Barwell Road Park site is 54.5 acres, and surrounds the Barwell Road Elementary School property. A 30,000 square foot community center attached to the school, provides a variety of recreation programs for all ages. Outside of school hours, the public has access to the school’s half mile walking track, playground, multipurpose field, and play courts.

Future development of the park will be guided by the Barwell Road Park Master Plan, which establishes a long term vision for the park property. Development of the park will occur in phases over the next several years. Funding for the development of the Master Plan and Phase One is provided by the 2007 Parks Bond.

Barwell Road Park has open space for a variety of outdoor activities. It is inviting to residents of all ages and abilities to play, learn, discover, or to just pass the time. The rolling landscape is home to wildlife, a mix of hardwood trees, and wetlands that flow to the Neuse River. Beneath the grounds

are rocks that were once molten lava. Accessible by trails for walking and bikes, Barwell Park honors its natural past and protects the present so that generations to come will enjoy all it has to offer.

Park Projects (cont.)

Throughout the summer and fall of 2017, the master plan for Brentwood Park was guided by the Citizen Planning Committee and the public in a series of eight meetings to determine key park values and a park vision. The public determined that the most important values that should be reflected in the master plan for Brentwood Park’s future development are play, nature, safety, connectivity, and accessibility. The final proposed master plan includes a new Neighborhood Center, shelter/ restroom complex, large playground, spray/mist feature, outdoor gym, improved parking areas, pedestrian connectivity and accessibility improvements, open play areas, basketball and tennis courts and nature play and environmental education areas.

Based on the community’s priorities gathered through the public input process, Phase 1 of park development will focus on the upland areas of the park master plan including the shelter/restroom complex, the playground and spray/ mist feature, improved parking areas and pedestrian and accessibility improvements. Funds from the 2014 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Bond Referendum includes \$2 million dollars for both the park master plan as well as the first phase of project implementation.

Brentwood Park



Park Projects (cont.)



The Walnut Creek Wetland Park is located southeast of downtown Raleigh on a 49-acre site between the Little Rock Creek and Walnut Creek Greenways. The park is comprised of marsh forest landscapes and floodplain of Walnut Creek. Walnut Creek Wetland Park is a tremendous asset, providing a community hub for the Rochester Heights and Biltmore Hills Neighborhoods, and an educational resource for local and regional educators. The park contains a number of important natural communities characterized by vegetation composition and appearance, wildlife, hydrology, soils and other abiotic factors.

This master plan is structured within a 25-year vision, 10-year master plan and 5-year action plan for Walnut Creek Wetland Park. The vision for the future of the park builds upon the unique history of the site while conserving important natural areas and meeting the needs of future park visitors. The following statement articulates the vision for the park: Expand Walnut Creek Wetland Center into an equitably accessible destination park with the focus of conserving the area’s environment and biodiversity, offering learning and social engagement opportunities for all, and celebrating arts and cultural heritage. The following objectives for the development of the park include:

- Encourage social engagement, economic development, and community pride
- Protect, conserve, and enhance the natural environment, biodiversity, and cultural heritage
- Provide a range of access for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities
- Promote understanding, awareness, and appreciation of the unique wetland environment
- Support interdisciplinary fun and academic learning opportunities through training and skills development

The first part of this master plan process involved conducting a Situation Assessment that included site analysis, community research and data collection, a public meeting with the area’s Citizens Advisory Council (CAC), a community survey, establishment of a public website, interviews with stakeholders, as well as the formation of a Citizen Planning Committee (CPC). Following the City Council’s approval of the Situation Assessment Report and the selection of CPC members, the Project Team and CPC met over a 6-month period to develop a vision, design program, and master plan for the park.



Pullen Aquatic Center is the City of Raleigh’s premier competitive aquatic venue. The facility hosts several large-scale swimming competitions annually. Pullen Aquatic Center is a 39,400 square foot facility that was built in 1992.

The Pullen Aquatic Center Renovation project will include new roofing, skylight replacement, building envelope and structural repair, replacement of natatorium lighting, diving board replacement, replacement of HVAC units, pool gutter system replacement and the addition of a natatorium dehumidification system. The renovation will close Pullen Aquatic Center from June through December 2018.

Pullen Aquatic Center renovation

Dedications

The City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department opened Forest Ridge Park on Saturday, September 30, 2017. After the ribbon cutting ceremony, there were demonstrations highlighting the park’s features and upcoming programs, including a guided trail walk and a bike maintenance workshop. Forest Ridge Park has trails for everyone, including single track mountain bike trails, hiking and multi-use trails. In addition to a welcome center, two shelters and a playground, Forest Ridge Park also is home to a wildlife garden designed for native plant species, bank fishing and nature and art explorer backpacks available for children to rent and explore the park.



Dr. Bill and Merrie Hedrick Homestead

City of Raleigh officials joined Hedrick family members on September 22, 2017 for the dedication of the Dr. Bill and Merrie Hedrick Homestead at Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve in Wake Forest.

Surrounded on three sides by the Neuse River, Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve consists of primarily undeveloped pastures and woodland areas. The upland fields have been farmed as crops or used as pasture for generations. The floodplain forests adjacent to the Neuse River are designated by the State of North Carolina

as a Significant Natural Heritage Area due to the presence of bottomland hardwood forests, wetlands, and a system of natural river levees.

Today, Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve contains almost 150 acres of pastures and woodlands connected to the Neuse River portion of the city’s greenway trail. What was once the Hedricks’ homestead has been renovated for nature education, temporary office space, and future use for expansion of interpretive information.



THE DR. BILL AND MERRIE HEDRICK HOMESTEAD
at Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve
Friday, September 22, 2017 | 10am





Moore Square

Groundbreaking

November 9, 2018

Construction began on Moore Square in the fall after a groundbreaking ceremony on November 9, 2017. Moore Square was originally conceived in 1792 when it was designated as one of four public spaces in Raleigh. Today, Moore Square is a historic, signature destination.

In May 2011, the Raleigh City Council approved the Moore Square Master Plan as presented. This concept design honors the Square’s historic heritage while establishing a forward looking vision for a 21st century urban space.

Construction is slated to be finished in 2019, and designers have a goal to preserve the history of the park and city, while also looking ahead to Raleigh’s Future.



Volunteer Contributions

Volunteers of all ages and backgrounds are contributing their time, talent and resources to make a difference in our community. Parks and cultural offerings across our City are made stronger by the spirited involvement of individuals, corporate groups, schools and community organizations.

Volunteers assist with park maintenance, coach athletic teams, assist at special events and keep our greenway trails clean and safe through the Adopt-A-Trail program.

Over the past year, nearly 14,000 volunteers gave more than 150,000 hours of service within the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department. These volunteer hours amount to a value of \$3.5M.





City of Oaks Foundation

Summer camp and outdoor nature play improve kids' physical and mental health as they build confidence and develop social skills. Our department has aligned with the City of Oaks Foundation to a program of financial assistance that allow kids to attend camp free or little cost.

The nonprofit foundation provided almost **\$20,000** in financial aid for youth aged 5-13 to participate in Raleigh's outdoor camps and nature programs in 2017. This made camp possible for over **60 kids**.

The foundation also is active in conservation, so that everyone can experience our parks, greenways, nature preserves, farms and community gardens. The organization:

- Worked with community groups and corporate partners to fund park improvements in Roanoke Park and Cameron Park, and to fund a three-week Summer Enrichment Program for teens 14-17 in partnership with the Raleigh Police Department's Youth and Family Services division;
- Facilitated the fundraising efforts for local volunteer groups, such as the Friends of Millbrook Dog Park and the Raleigh Riders program, which is providing assisted biking through local parks;
- Hosted three Open Garden Days in the beautiful Joslin Garden, as well as an Easter Egg Hunt and a special Mothers Day Tea at the Joslin House in the spring;
- Hosted outdoor plein air painting sessions in connection with the Visual Art Exchange at Joslin Garden, a Fall Harvest Tea at the Joslin House, and a special neighborhood Halloween event featuring live owls, bats, and other creepy creatures to benefit local animal rescue groups in the fall;
- Partnered with Sustainable Raleigh as a co-sponsor of Raleigh Urban Agriculture Day at the Mordecai Historic Park, and the Raleigh Environmental Awards.



The Numbers

The PRCR Department's 2017-2018 operating budget is **\$50.3M**.

The Department's Capital Improvement Budget for FY18 is \$37M and includes \$28M for 2014 bond projects.

Play It Forward

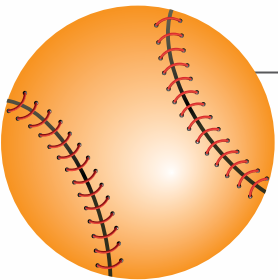
The City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department strives to ensure that no one is denied the benefits of public recreation due to the inability to pay. In 2017-2018:

437

families were assisted,

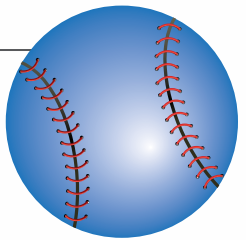
with the Amount of Awards totaling

\$124,276.14



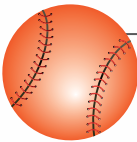
39%

Recreation
\$19,512,366



33%

Parks/Grounds
Maintenance
\$16,537,630



19%

Natural &
Cultural Resources
\$9,468,057



5%

Park Development
& Communications
\$2,691,001



4%

Business Services
\$2,139,670

RALEIGH PARKS BUCKETLIST

#parksbucketlist



Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department serves one of the nation's fastest growing cities. Each week, 164 new residents call Raleigh home. We needed a way to introduce newcomers to over 10,000 acres of park land and also inspire Raleigh natives to explore new park destinations. The Raleigh Parks Summer Bucket List campaign was launched June 2017 and continued through Labor Day. Patrons were able to pick up or download a Raleigh Parks Bucket List, check off items, share photos and win prizes! We saw great success across all social channels and a reach of nearly 70,000 on Facebook alone! In addition, the campaign generated great visual content that we shared on social to maintain excitement throughout summer.

Summer Bucket List



Satisfaction Surveys

Raleigh residents who participate in online surveys help us learn whether we are meeting their needs. Their evaluation let us know whether we are providing the exceptional experiences they expect. Over the past year, we received about 7,200 completed surveys from our program participants. Overall, their satisfaction rating was 4.5 out of 5.0.

Get Social with Raleigh Parks

Get Social with Raleigh Parks: the department embraces social media to keep members of the community engaged and to help us stay informed about what matters to them. We look at social media as a customer service tool, allowing us to interact with citizens, receive feedback and share information.

Our online social media community has grown to 64,335 members.

Twitter: **14,599** followers

Facebook: **6,497** page likes

Pinterest: **378** followers

Youtube: **40,568** lifetime views

Instagram: **2,293** followers

Join the conversation

Have a question about the parks? **Ask us.**

Have a shoutout about something fun in the parks? **Tell us.**

 **Facebook.com/raleighparks**

 **Twitter.com/raleighparks**

 **Instagram.com/raleighparks**

 **Pinterest.com/raleighparks**

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Corey Branch
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*at time of printing



