

RECREATION ELEMENT DATA AND ANALYSIS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
LIST OF TABLES	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
I. Existing Recreation Resources	1
A. Recreation Site Classification	1
B. Recreation Site Inventory	7
II. Recreation Needs Analysis	7
A. Recreation Planning Areas	7
B. Population and Demographic Analysis	10
C. Existing Level of Service for Parks & Facilities	10
D. Current & Future Recreational Needs Determination	10
E. Proposed Strategy for Future	13
MAP APPENDICES	
1. Recreation Sites: Urban	
2. Recreation Sites: Rural	
3. Inventory - Countywide Recreation Sites	

LIST OF TABLES	PAGE
Recreation Element....	i

1.	Recreation Site Classification System	6
2.	Recreation Site Inventory Summary	8
3.	County-owned Park Development	11
4.	Level of Service	12

INTRODUCTION

The information presented in this Element identifies the current recreation sites within Alachua County that are available to the public. Examination of these sites including types of facilities, availability to the public, demand for additional recreation sites and existing undeveloped recreation

Recreation Element....iii

acreage were used to project future needs and to provide guidance for adopting the proposed Goals, Objectives and Policies.

The recognition of recreation as an integral part of a community's quality of life has led Alachua County to pursue the completion of a County-wide Recreation Master Plan. This master plan will present the existing conditions of parks and recreational facilities and programs, identify the need for new facilities, develop a capital improvement plan for new and existing parks, and identify the programming needs for new and existing facilities. Phase I of the master plan will be presented, for approval, to the Alachua County Commission on March 26, 2002. Phase II is scheduled to be completed by the end of (calendar year) 2002. A comprehensive county-wide master plan for recreation will produce the vision for achieving a high quality and sustainable community with prime recreational resources.

EXISTING RECREATION RESOURCES

The recreation site inventory is organized according to two primary factors, the location and type of facilities. Alachua County can be divided into two regions characterized by the intensity of development and land use. Specifically, these are urban Alachua County and rural Alachua County as shown in the maps (Recreation Sites: Urban and Recreation Sites: Rural). The Recreation sites included in this Element are organized by their location with respect to these areas. Site types and facilities are described according to the following classification.

Recreation Site Classification

Recreation sites are classified according to the type of recreational opportunities they provide the users. The site types considered here are resource-based and activity-based.

Resource-based sites are those that provide recreational opportunities to the user dependent upon the components offered by the natural resources at the site. Examples of resource-based sites include springs, lakes, rivers, forests, etc., that provide opportunities for swimming, boating, fishing, camping, hiking, etc. Activity-based sites provide recreation that is user-oriented independent of location or the natural environment. Examples of activity-based sites include parks that provide such facilities as softball complexes, tennis courts, soccer or football fields, and fitness trails.

Park types are described by the capacity and function in which they serve the recreational needs of the communities of Alachua County. A classification system of parks is provided in Table 1 which represents the types of recreation sites found in Alachua County. These recreation site types are based on recommended guidelines for parks and recreation sites provided by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the National Recreation and Parks Association as applied to the unique characteristics of Alachua County. These park types provide the general framework to classify each site in the inventory.

The following list provides a brief description of the various park types:

Neighborhood Park - a park that provides local activity-based recreational activities for a neighborhood area; centrally located to the population of the neighborhood, within walking and bicycle access; often developed in conjunction with school sites; types of facilities include ballfields and courts, playgrounds, picnic areas.

Community Park - a park which provides larger organized activity-based recreational activities for several neighborhoods; accessible to neighborhood areas primarily by collector and minor arterial roads with bicycle and walking trail access desirable; provides larger recreation facilities such as softball complexes, pools, football and soccer, picnic areas and exercise trails.

Regional Park - an area that provides diverse activity-based and resource-based recreational activities for all county residents; access should be provided by major collector roads but can vary dependent upon the location of the resource; typical activity-based facilities would be oriented toward team spectator sports including softball, soccer, football, etc.; typical resource-based activities include natural, cultural, and historical studies, trails for hiking or horseback riding, camping, and swimming areas; trail connections to overall park system and state parks desirable.

Regional Preserve - the preserve is oriented toward protection of critical habitat areas for plant and wildlife communities; its primary function is to serve as a wildlife refuge; secondary functions may include facilities typical of the regional resource park such as nature study, hiking, swimming, boating, camping and horseback riding; the preserve also serves as an area for field research for various studies such as wildlife patterns and behavior and relationship to environment. Regional Preserves are not proposed to be included in the level of service for concurrency purposes.

Nature Park - a resource-based recreational area designed to provide public access to environmentally sensitive and/or unique natural areas; primary function is to provide nature study through nature trails and interpretive exhibits; other facilities present may include picnic areas, observation towers and boardwalks.

Special Use Parks - these parks provide a wide range of recreational activities that are designed to the specification or limitations of the recreational activity itself; access is variable; Special Use parks are categorized as Special Use-A for activity based and Special Use-R for resource based; examples of Special Use-A parks include golf courses, stadiums, tracks and shooting ranges; examples of Special Use-R parks include botanical gardens, historic sites, boating facilities and fishing piers.

SITE TYPE	TYPICAL SERVICE AREA	TYPICAL SIZE (ACRES)	AVG POPULATION SERVED	EXISTING LOS* AC/1000 PERSONS	TYPICAL AND CHAR
Neighborhood Park	1/2 Mi Radius (May be larger in the rural area due to low pop density)	5 to 15	up to 5,000	0.14/1,000	Local activity-based rec a ballfield, courts, play access central to neighb trails; location adjacent

Community Park	3 Mi Radius (May be larger in the rural area due to low pop density)	15 to 75	up to 25,000	.053/1,000	Active recreation facilities for several neighborhoods for organized events such as soccer, softball, football, tennis, etc.; access by collector or minor arterial roads; access to bicycle trails desirable.
Nature Park	Variable	10 to 300	Variable	1.95/1,000	Resource-based passive recreation designed to provide access to unique natural areas; facilities include nature trails and picnic areas; access depends on location of the resource.
Regional Park	Countywide	Greater Than 100	Greater Than 100,000	2.09/1,000	A site of diverse recreational activities, provides access to natural resource areas such as springs, rivers or other regionally significant areas including State Parks and supplies active recreation facilities such as multi-use fields and courts; Access should be provided by major roads.
Special Use Activity Park	Variable	Variable	Greater Than 25,000	0.0	An area that provides a specific function associated with one recreation activity; examples of active special use parks include golf courses, stadiums or tracks; access is dependent on site location.
Special Use Resource Park	Variable	Variable	Greater Than 25,000	1.23/1,000	An area that provides a specific function associated with one recreational activity; examples of resource special use parks include boat ramps and fishing piers, botanical gardens and historic sites; access is dependent on resource location.

*Existing level of service figures correspond to developed acres of each of these park types.
Source: Alachua County Department of Public Works.

Recreation Site Inventory

As part of the Recreation Master Plan, an inventory of existing public and private recreation sites and facilities that serve the unincorporated areas of Alachua County has been organized according to site type and region. For purposes of gathering data, the County was divided into twelve (12) planning areas based on public school district zones. This not only indicates the need and desire to establish a community-based approach to recreational facility planning and programming, but also highlights the potential for partnership with the School Board of Alachua County.

Alachua County has twenty-five (25) parks throughout the unincorporated area. Four parks, Jonesville, SE 35th Street, McCall, and Lake Kanapaha are undeveloped. There are twelve (12) Special-Use facilities, five (5) Community parks, three (3) Neighborhood parks, four (4) Nature parks and one (1) Regional park. The map titled Alachua County Parks Inventory shows the location of parks and recreational

facilities throughout the County, as well as public school sites.

County-wide, in addition to Alachua County parks, there are more than 112,000 acres of land in public ownership. State parks account for 30,540 acres, the Suwannee River Water Management District has 5,540 acres and the St. John’s River Water Management District has 78,190 acres. Most of these lands offer resource-based recreational activities or serve as open space.

Table 2 provides a summary of recreation sites by ownership. This information was gathered in preparation of the County-wide Recreation Master Plan.

RECREATION NEEDS ANALYSIS

Recreation Planning Areas

As previously stated, for purposes of the Recreation Master Plan process, the County was divided into twelve planning areas based on public school district zones. This was a recommendation from the Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee. With the exception of four of the planning areas, each one has a municipality at its center. The City of Gainesville is split between two planning areas and there are two other areas covering only unincorporated portions of the County. The planning areas are listed as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Planning Area 1 - High Springs | Planning Area 7 - Western Suburban |
| Planning Area 2 - Alachua | Planning Area 8 - West Gainesville |
| Planning Area 3 - LaCrosse | Planning Area 9 - East Gainesville |
| Planning Area 4 - Waldo | Planning Area 10 - Rural East Alachua Co. |
| Planning Area 5 - Newberry | Planning Area 11 - Hawthorne |
| Planning Area 6 - Archer | Planning Area 12 - Micanopy. |

Table 2. Recreation Site Inventory Summary Total Acreage by Recreation Site Type							
Ownership	Neighborhood	Community	Nature	Regional/ State	Regional Preserve	Special Use-r	Spec Use-
Alachua Co.	14.0	389.55	729.53	202	0.0	170.4	
Alachua	5.42	25.84	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Archer	12.22	9.75	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Gainesville	167.12	123.57	350.66	74.88	0.0	200.07	1
Hawthorne	1.27	32.73	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
High Springs	6.94	24.79	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

LaCrosse	5.08	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.08
Micanopy	0.5	9.07	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.57
Newberry	0.7	49.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.4
Waldo	11.61	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6	15.21
State	9.83	0.0	0.0	2,272.42	56,562.32	275.78	195.63	59,315.98
Private/ Non Profit	37.29	107.41	0.0	0.0	0.0	207.3	0.0	352
Total	271.98	772.41	1080.19	2549.3	56,562.32	853.55	392.68	62,482.43

Source: Alachua County County-wide Recreation Master Plan (Draft); 1/02.

Population & Demographic Analysis

Population and demographic data from the University of Florida Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BEBR) was used for the purposes of this analysis. The County-wide population estimate for 2000 is 216,249; the unincorporated area population estimate for 2000 is 96,353. Projections of County-wide population are 237,057 and 253,628 for 2005 and 2010, respectively. Projections of unincorporated area population are 106,191 and 114,251 for 2005 and 2010, respectively. This information was used to determine recreation needs and as guidelines for establishing levels of service for each park type and facility.

Existing Level of Service for Parks & Facilities

Table 3 shows the current level of service for Alachua County based on the adopted standards of 0.5 developed acres/1,000 unincorporated area population for activity-based recreation and 5.0 developed acres/1,000 unincorporated area population for resource-based recreation. As indicated in the information presented in the table, the County is exceeding its current level of service standards.

Current & Future Recreational Needs Determination

The Recreation Master Plan proposes to identify service gaps by considering the existing conditions and applying level of service criteria

(based on a service area radius) for neighborhood and community parks. In analyzing the County's future recreational needs, information gathered from user group and public surveys was included. An important factor in the analysis of current and future recreational needs is the extent to which public school facilities will be utilized for public recreation.

Table 4 shows projections of acreage needed for the years 2005/06, 2010/11, 2015/16 and 2020/21 based on the adopted level of service standards (separate standards for activity-based and resource-based recreation). As indicated, in order to meet an activity-based level of service standard of 0.5 developed acres/1,000 unincorporated population, no new acreage is needed for activity-based recreation through 2020. Some additional acreage will be needed for resource-based recreation. Certain lands acquired through the *Alachua County Forever* land conservation initiative are expected to be made publicly accessible and counted toward the resource-based level of service, thereby meeting future needs.

Table 3. County-owned Park Development

	PARK	PARK TYPE	ACRES	% DEVELOPED	ACTIVE DEVELOPED	RESOURCE DEVELOPED
1	CELLON OAK	NA	3.74	95.00%		3.55
2	COPELAND	N	5.00	100.00%	5.00	
3	E.P. POWERS	SU-r	10.90	100.00%		10.90
4	FOREST	C	24.70	70.00%	17.29	
5	CELLON OAK	N	4.00	100.00%	4.00	
6	HIGH SPRINGS BOAT RAMP	SU-r	0.25	100.00%		0.25
7	HOLDEN	SU-r	5.00	100.00%		5.00
8	JONESVILLE	C	98.00	0.00%	0.00	
9	KANAPAHA BOTANICAL GARDENS	SU-r	49.57	80.00%		39.66
10	KANAPAHA	C	22.95	90.00%	20.66	
11	LAKE ALTO	SU-r	22.33	36.00%		8.04
12	LAKE KANAPAHA	NA	453.37	0.00%		0.00
13	LOCHLOOSA	SU-r	1.32	100.00%		1.32
14	McCALL	NA	78.42	0.00%		0.00
15	M.K. RAWLINGS	SU-r	12.08	61.00%		7.37
16	MELROSE BOAT RAMP	SU-r	0.25	100.00%		0.25
17	MONTEOCHA	N	5.00	100.00%	5.00	
18	POE SPRINGS	R	202.00	100.00%		202.00
19	SAN FELASCO	NA	194.00	95.00%		184.30
20	SANTA FE LAKE	SU-r	24.98	100.00%		24.98
21	S.E. 35th STREET	C	27.00	0.00%	0.00	

Proposed Strategy for the Future

The completion and subsequent adoption of the Recreation Master Plan will provide a definitive strategy for meeting the recreational needs of the people of Alachua County. Some preliminary recommendations include the following:

1. Develop a comprehensive 'Mutual Use Agreement' and utilize public elementary and middle schools for neighborhood and community recreation needs;
2. Develop a 'best practices' maintenance manual for use by all recreational providers in the County addressing regular maintenance schedules and minimum standards for facility maintenance;
3. Complete an inventory of existing and planned greenways and trails for the entire County;
4. Establish park planning areas based on public school zones and develop performance-based land development regulations wherein proposed developments would address the impact of development on recreation;
5. Create partnerships between the School Board and recreation providers when selecting sites for new schools and parks;
6. Adopt a level of service standard based on service area radiuses for different park types;
7. Establish specific criteria for prioritizing park needs emphasizing the equitable distribution of parks throughout the County;
8. Develop a marketing campaign to generate support for a referendum to provide funding for new parks and recreational facilities.