INTRODUCTION

"In wildness is the preservation of the world."
Henry David Thoreau

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The Twenty First Century will clearly be the age of the environment, and environmental issues will permeate and influence every aspect of our lives.

As we enter this new age with the year 2000 a mere seven years away, many challenges and opportunities await us as a society. Bold, new action must be taken to insure that the quality of life as we know it will be protected and enhanced through responsible change. It is in this spirit that the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Comprehensive Plan for Fauquier has been developed and, indeed, many bold recommendations for the future role and mission of the Parks & Recreation Department have been suggested.

Some may question the involvement of Parks & Recreation in broad issues such as preservation of Open Space, Scenic Quality, and Environmental Protection. However, one only need look to the beginning of the parks movement in this country to see that this movement itself was a response to concerns for environmental protection and stewardship of the land with a vision of man and the environment being in harmony. It is this tradition and vision that will lead Fauquier County Parks and Recreation Department in satisfying the human need for recreation into the Twenty First Century.

BACKGROUND

Fauquier is a relatively large county of 660 square miles located in the Piedmont province of Virginia, 45 miles west of Washington, D.C. The county is on the edge of a rapidly growing metropolitan area and has undergone accelerated growth as a bedroom community in recent years. However, it is still relatively rural, with a population of approximately 50,000. Even though the county will no doubt continue to grow, it has made a commitment to maintain a clear sense of rural values, environmental quality and the preservation of its unique character. Generations of Fauquier citizens have enjoyed and sought to protect this unique character and quality of life.

Open land to appreciate nature's beauty is also a part of what gives Fauquier its unique quality. In America's preindustrial age, this was our birthright. Things have changed, but in Fauquier, one can still find the natural world in which to re-create one's self. The question is who will find this true in the future and where. The County's towns and settlements are established on the economic base of agriculture. Fauquier's towns and settlements are still places of rural tradition where neighbors can and do greet one another, consummate business dealings and participate in local commerce. Preserving agricultural uses is one of the central themes in the Comprehensive Plan.

Fauquier's uniqueness also extends to its recreational traditions and opportunities. As the center of the thoroughbred industry in Virginia and the center of the sport of fox hunting in the United States, the County's equestrian traditions are well-established. In other recreational opportunities, Fauquier is once again unique. Within its boundaries are two of the State's scenic rivers, a national scenic trail corridor, a wealth of historic sites, mountains, natural areas, unsurpassed scenic landscapes and many miles of scenic rural roads. However, not everything about Fauquier County is unique. Like most rural counties, recreation in the past has been provided by private individuals, clubs, civic organizations, churches, schools, etc. Fauquier is similar to other rural communities which have experienced rapid growth. When the County recognized the need to provide recreational services, it found itself in a position of not being able to fully respond to the human needs of its citizens for recreational opportunities.

PURPOSE/SCOPE

While the concept of recreation is extremely broad, most social scientists and recreational professionals agree that recreation or re-creation is necessary for the fulfillment of human needs. Webster defines recreate, "to create anew; ...to refresh by means of relaxation and enjoyment as after work to restore or refresh physically or mentally." In general, recreation is a voluntary leisure time activity involving a change of pace or focus which produces satisfaction. For the purposes of this study, recreation is defined as a human activity and experience undertaken primarily for the satisfaction of the participants to creatively develop their innate capacities, intelligently use their energies, and enrich their lives. Recreation is a necessary human need, essential for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the individual and of society. As one of the elements provided by human service agencies, recreation is unique in its approach to the holistic needs of human beings.

As the world and Fauquier County mature into the information age, a global economy, a conserver of society, and a responsive, community based democracy, the importance of personal wellness, strong families, community health and balanced lifestyles are acknowledged for satisfying productive and effective society. Characteristics of that society include:

- the tourism industry based on recreational needs
- the quality of life in our communities which is basic to the attraction of economic development
- the challenges ahead require a fit and healthy society
- the increased use of discretionary time for personal growth and training
- the use of recreation services for the needs of working parents
- the best insurance against expensive health problems is active living
- the unique position of recreation services to deliver primary prevention programs that avoid waste of human resources; recreation builds strong citizens, families and communities -- antidotes to alienation, vandalism and dependence on more costly services
- the increase in understanding of different cultures
- the reduction of stress in today's fast paced society
- the increase in awareness of the environment
- the innovation, conservation and coalition building qualities of recreation agencies
- the fact that more money is spent by the American public on recreation than on the national defense

Most agree that the powerful economic forces driving growth in our County cannot be entirely resisted, and the area as we know it will change. The purpose of this study is to help plan for expected growth, seeing to it that historic and environmental recreational resources are preserved and new facilities are provided that contribute to the quality of life in Fauquier County.

The Code of Virginia Title 15.1, chapter 11, article 4 states that "localities shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction." In part, this plan is being developed as the parks, recreation and open space component of the Fauquier County Comprehensive Plan.

The purpose and scope of this study is to facilitate the mission of the County Parks and Recreation Department which is as follows:

> The Fauquier County Parks and Recreation Board is dedicated to the enhancement of the quality of life for all people in Fauquier County. Working in a partnership with the people, the Department shall provide the leadership to assure that citizens receive high quality recreational facilities and services.

Among the responsibilities of the County Parks and Recreation Department are:

- Set goals and objectives.
- Analyze existing conditions of population, natural, and cultural resources, current recreational facilities and programs, and citizen preferences; determine current and future needs; make recommendations for upgrading existing facilities, providing new facilities, and plan for implementation.
- Identify recreational needs in the County, including special communities, minorities, and the disabled and provide facilities, programs, etc., to fulfill these needs in an efficient, practical and economically feasible way.
- Study and evaluate present and future supply and demand for parks and recreational facilities in Fauquier County.
- Set standards and identify deficiencies.
- Prepare a plan showing existing and proposed recreational facilities.
- Provide a guide for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of Parks and Recreation and Preservation of Open Space through the year 2000.
- Establish a flexible updating process responsive to annual budgets, changes in priorities, site specific planning, changing circumstances and special opportunities.
- Help maintain and improve the level of service.
- Define an action program and corresponding policies to implement the plan.
- Establish a flexible framework for providing needed recreational opportunities if and when growth occurs.
- Address the Parks and Recreation Department's role in critical resource management issues including open space, scenic historic, water, etc.
- Guide recreational activities and facilities within Fauquier County to be provided by county government.

PARKS AND RECREATION MISSION STATEMENT

The Fauquier County Parks and Recreation Department is dedicated to the enhancement of the quality of life for all people in Fauquier County. Working in a partnership with the people, the Department shall provide the leadership to assure that citizens receive high quality recreational services and facilities, emphasizing leisure education/counseling, environmental awareness/ preservation, civic concerns/civic pride by serving as a catalyst for social unity, personal achievement, economic vitality, family cohesion, education, health, and environmental awareness.

In operations addressing our mission, we value innovation, efficiency/ effectiveness, and accountability in responding to evolving community needs. We value the natural heritage of our County, the diversity of human needs, leisure self determination for individuals and families, and the best quality in all we do for the people of Fauquier County.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In carrying out its mission, the Parks and Recreation Department has adopted the goals as follows, plus objectives and targets within this framework:

Environment

- Assist in open space preservation.
- Assist in Preserving the scenic characteristics of Fauquier County.
- Lead efforts in maintaining county's natural and historic heritage.
- Preserve areas with special recreational, historical, cultural, environmental significance.
- Establish a county-wide environmental ethic.
- Promote better community appearance.
- Foster community pride.
- Promote environmental education.

Facilities

- Improve recreational opportunities in the County.
- Acquire and develop a system of facilities which meets the needs of Fauquier County residents and accommodates a broad range of users and resources.
- Meet increasing park and open space demands if and when population expands.
- Provide convenient access for residents to parks and recreational facilities.
- Provide maximum accessibility to facilities for the differently abled.
- Make citizens aware of parks and recreational facilities in their area.
- Ensure that facilities are safe and secure.
- Act as a catalyst for non governmental recreation enterprises.

Programs

- Improve recreational opportunities in the County.
- Promote continued improvement in the health of county residents.
- Act as a catalyst for the development of non governmental recreation enterprises.

- Provide recreational services developed over a broad range of experience levels for youth and families, emphasizing leisure self dependence/self sufficiency skills and life style/habits, providing support throughout life.

- Provide prompt responses to community recreational and leisure needs.

- Provide programs which cover a wide range of physical, social and cultural activities to serve all age groups including those with special problems.

- Ensure that all receive adequate recreational opportunities.

Departmental Effectiveness

- Increase public involvement by focusing on actual needs.

- Establish Parks and Recreation Department as a clearing house of parks and recreation information.

- Assist in elimination of gaps and duplication in recreational services, and encourage private sector recreational development.

- Educate families toward self dependency, self sufficient leisure lifestyle and habits, and positive life options.

- Provide high quality services and facilities efficiently.

- Identify areas of specialized recreational needs and incorporate these into planning.

- Maintain a sound financial position and increase the Department's non-tax revenue base.

- Provide recreational opportunities readily accessible to all county residents.

- Enhance citizen awareness of parks and recreation facilities and services.

- Establish a partnership approach with citizens in providing recreational opportunities.

- Be innovative in providing facilities and services.

- Achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness through technology, professional expertise, specialization, standardization.

- Provide a balance of free and fee based programs.

- Establish policies to be enforced in the carrying out of Parks and Recreation business and endeavors.

- Although it is beyond the scope of this study to plan for the specific recreational facilities to be provided by other governmental entities and the private sector, it does recognize this potential and encourages full utilization of these resources.

- Provide a framework for cooperation between the Parks & Recreation Department and other agencies of government, private industry, and the public as a whole.

METHODOLOGY

A discussion of methodology must examine the subject on three different levels. First, the overall methodology of providing recreational services to the citizens of the county; second, the methodology of developing this study; and third, the methodology within the study of determining recommendations. The following is an explanation of these three components.

Departmental Methodology of Providing Recreational Services

The Code of Virginia Sec. 15.1-271 enables "any city, town, or county (to) establish and conduct a system of public recreation and playgrounds. . . (to) set apart for such use any land or buildings and other recreational facilities by gift, purchase, lease, or condemnation. . . (to) employ a Director of Recreation and assistants. . . expend funds for aforesaid purposes."

In 1967, the county government recognized the need to provide recreational opportunities to its citizens and created the Park and Recreation Department. A five-member board was created in 1972 to oversee the activities of the department. The first staff member of the Fauquier County Parks and Recreation Department was hired in 1975. As is typical in most recreation departments, when Fauquier's was finally in place, it was with a significant backlog of recreational needs to be met. Since its beginning, the department's focus has been on fulfilling the needs of highest demand within the limits of the department's resources. After several years the department recognized its own need to establish a more systematic and comprehensive method of determining recreation needs and how to best fulfill these needs in an organized, efficient and cost effective manner. It was determined that a comprehensive recreational master plan was needed to guide recreational services and facilities and this study was initiated.

Once the plan is in place it will act as the framework for providing recreational services through facilities and programs. It is designed to be part of the overall county comprehensive plan and intended to help fulfill the goals of that plan. This plan not only determines current deficiencies, but analyzes future needs and makes recommendations to fulfill these needs. For this reason, the plan is not just a document but a process which is ongoing, and although the plan contains text and graphics, the words and drawings should not be viewed as static but as constantly evolving.

A significant part of providing recreational services is the constant review and update process. This process will provide the framework for growth and change as follows:

Annual Parks Board/Staff/Consultant Update: Each year a review of the plan including all plan elements should take place at the direction of the Parks and Recreation Board to make note of any changes in existing conditions, needs, trends, funding, etc. Record should be made of what has been accomplished and the overall effectiveness of the plan.

Methodology Of Plan Preparation

The second level of methodology is in the preparation of the study itself. A team approach was taken with each team member providing services or guidance within their given areas of expertise. Team members and their respective areas of primary responsibility were as follows:

Parks Board and Staff

- Provide overall guidance to the study.
- Provide information about past and present recreation facilities/programs/operations, maintenance, etc.
- Assist in gathering information and data.
- Assist in evaluation of data.
- Assist in establishing recreation standards of Fauquier County.
- Determine recommendations for administration, operations, maintenance, management, personnel.
- Help determine cost.
- Prioritize recommendations.
- Establish implementation goals and strategies.

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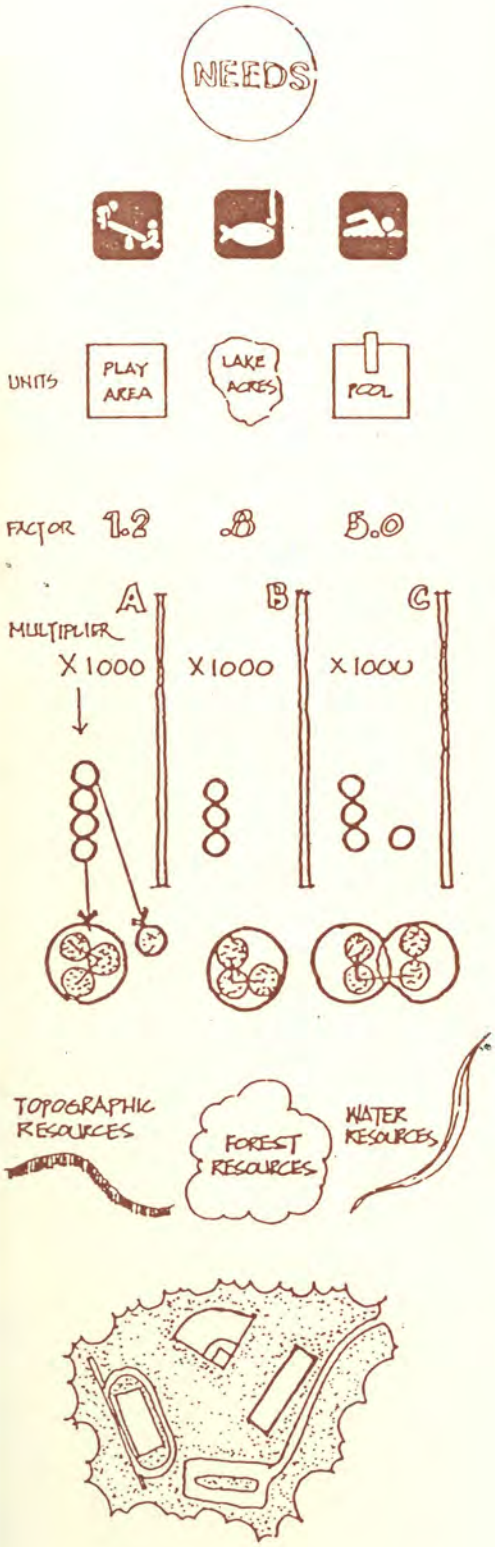
- Inventory resources/constraints/recreational standards/park classification systems.
- Establish Fauquier facility standards.
- Analyze existing facilities.
- Determine needs.
- Make facility development recommendations.
- Establish facility classification system.
- Determine potential new facilities.
- Prepare conceptual plans.
- Help determine costs and obstacles.
- Prepare strategies for development.

Planning District 9

- Provide and analyze demographic data.
- Provide cost information.
- Inventory existing recreational facilities.
- Inventory historical resources.
- Identify potential funding sources.
- Develop funding strategies.

Citizens Advisory Committee

- A Citizen Advisory Committee was formed to represent a wide variety of citizen interest in parks and recreation. The committee's major functions were to act as a sounding board and to provide advice about the general direction of the study.



Study Methodology Used in Determining Recommendations

The intrastudy procedure for arriving at recommendations is a 9-step process.

1. Recognition of Recreation as a Need to be Fulfilled With the Assistance of County Government. Recreation as a need of county residents to be provided by county government was recognized and acted upon by the County Board of Supervisors with the establishment of Parks and Recreation Board and Department of Parks and Recreation.

2. Identify Activities. The second step of the process is to identify all forms of recreational activities which can potentially fulfill recreational needs. This covers a wide range and variety of activities including sports, arts, etc.

3. Identify Kinds of Activity Spaces Needed. After potential needs for fulfilling activities are identified the kinds of spaces needed to accommodate the activity must be determined. Examples are studios for arts, fields for baseball and courts for basketball.

4. Establish Standards. Once activities are identified then standards must be established which determine how many activity spaces are needed to serve a given population.

5. Demographics. After establishing how many people will be served by a given facility the next step is to determine how many people there are and how they are distributed throughout the county today. Projections need to be made about future distribution.

6. Determine Number, Type of Activity Spaces and General Distribution. By applying the standards in step 4 to the demographic information determined in step 5 the numbers needed and general distribution can be determined.

7. Group Activities into Facilities. Conceptually establish facilities by arranging compatible activities into logical groups for efficient implementation and operations. i.e., baseball, soccer, softball, football, play apparatus, nature center, restrooms, shelter, volleyball, parking combined to form a community park facility.

8. Match Facilities to Existing Conditions/Resources. Because of the specific nature of the facility e.g., ball fields must be on relatively level ground, facilities and complexes must be matched with compatible sites and conditions.

9. Refine Complexes during Design Process. Once a specific site has been selected for a given complex, final facilities that will be included in the complex and their specific nature will be determined with further citizen input.