

2014 – 2017
Recreation Master Plan



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CALHOUN COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to evaluate recreational facilities, activities and programs currently offered in the county, gather input from county residents on various recreational issues and guide the county in the establishment and provision of complimentary recreation services. This Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Master Plan consists of an inventory and assessment of all existing park facilities and programs; an evaluation of the residents' satisfaction with those facilities and programs; and recommendations for establishment and growth of county facilities, programs, and staff. This master plan aims to help meet the current and future community facilities and recreational needs for the people of Calhoun County.

Calhoun County currently owns and operates three community centers and one athletic ball field. However, there are some municipalities and rural communities within the county that operate programs and/or maintain parks for recreation. The following list identifies and locates the existing parks and recreation facilities available to the people of Calhoun County. A detailed inventory of each park and/or facility is listed in this document.

County Community Facilities

- Fort Motte Community Center
- Sandy Run Athletics Field
- Saint John Community Center
- John Ford Community Center

State/National

- Lake Marion
- Congaree River
- Congaree National Park
- Congaree Bluffs

St. Matthews

- Inner City Parks
- Tennis Courts

Cameron

- Inner City Parks
- Tennis Courts

Private

- Calhoun County Country Club Golf Course
- Sandy Run Community Center
- St. Matthews and Cameron Ball fields (*Dixie Youth Baseball Leagues*)

INVENTORY ANALYSIS

Introduction

Beautiful Calhoun County is located on the outskirts of South Carolina's capital city; the county seat is located in St. Matthews. A rural and pastoral region of the state, Calhoun County is a popular destination for some of the nation's leading industries, particularly locomotive and logistic companies who need convenient access to interstates. A short half hour drive to Columbia and an hour and half drive to historic Charleston, Calhoun County is an ideal place for those who enjoy a quiet and friendly community close to urban cities.

Calhoun County is about blue skies and mild weather and is home to a little over 15,000 residents. Saint Matthews is the County Seat of Calhoun County and was established in 1908. We are only 35 minutes from the state capitol and a little over an hour from the Port of Charleston. In addition, you can be in the beautiful mountains of South Carolina in about two hours. We have four interstates within a 20-mile range: I-26, I-95, I-20, and I-77. We truly are in the heart of South Carolina.

Purpose

The purpose of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to evaluate recreational facilities, activities, and programs currently offered in the county, gather input from county residents on various recreational issues and guide the county in the establishment and provision of complimentary recreation services. This Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Master Plan consists of an inventory and assessment of all existing park facilities, and programs; an evaluation of the residents' satisfaction with those facilities and programs; and recommendations for establishment and growth of county facilities, programs, and staff. This master plan aims to help meet the current and future community facilities and recreational needs for the people of Calhoun County.

Calhoun County

Calhoun County is situated between Lexington, Richland, Sumter, Clarendon, and Orangeburg counties. There are a few natural amenities within the county which include lakes, rivers, wetland areas, state and local parks, and historic sites. Major roadways that provide regional transportation routes around and through Calhoun County includes Interstate I-26, US Highways 601, 176/21, and SC Highways 6, 33, and 172. Much of the existing development within the county occurs along these corridors and at intersections of these corridors.

There is a major lake and river located within Calhoun County. Lake Marion flows along the eastern border of the county and the Congaree River flows along the northern border of the county. The two bodies of water provide fun opportunities for fishing, boating, hunting, and camping in and around the county.

One of South Carolina's scenic forests, Congaree Bluffs, is located in Calhoun County. The Congaree Bluffs offer scenic views of the river and hardwood forests as far as 30 miles away.

The incorporated municipalities located within Calhoun County include the Towns of St. Matthews and Cameron. Other rural communities are Sandy Run, Fort Motte, Lone Star, and Creston.

Summary of Existing Facilities

Calhoun County currently owns and operates three community centers and an athletic ball field.

Fort Motte Area

FORT MOTTE COMMUNITY CENTER has multi-purpose rooms for summer and afterschool programs. It is also the perfect location for special events (birthday parties, anniversaries, etc...). The outdoor area is designed with a baseball field, a full basketball court, and a playground area that has a jungle gym and a swing set for children.

Town of Cameron

SAINT JOHN COMMUNITY CENTER is the newest built community facility that offers an open floor plan which includes a designated area for kitchen usage. The open multi-purpose room is great for summer and afterschool programs, special events (birthday parties, anniversaries, etc...). The outdoor area is designed with two baseball fields, two full basketball courts, and a playground area that has a jungle gym for adventurous climbing. In addition, the center is equipped with a refrigerator, an ice machine, and public restrooms.

Town of St. Matthews

JOHN FORD COMMUNITY CENTER is the largest of the county's community centers. The building is comprised of space for community programs such as public services, community programs, athletics, community meetings, special events, and emergency sheltering. Some of the indoor amenities are a large activity room with kitchen access, a gymnasium with locker rooms, multi-purpose rooms for community programs and public services, and a trade building. The outdoors include a football/soccer field, walking track, and a playground area with exercise equipment.

Sandy Run Area:

SANDY RUN ATHLETIC FIELDS have two outdoor baseball fields that are ready for a fun day of play. The baseball fields are equipped with lights, scoreboards, and bleachers. In addition, the facility has a concession building and public restrooms. It is also the perfect location for special events (birthday parties, anniversaries, etc...).

Calhoun County School District

Public education in Calhoun County is the responsibility of the Calhoun County School District. The School District currently operates three school facilities that are located in St. Matthews and the Sandy Run area. The School facilities consist of two elementary/middle schools housing grades Pre-K through eight and a high school serving grades ninth through twelve.

There are also private schools in Calhoun County consisting of several small Christian schools and Calhoun Academy, which is a large private school. In addition, homeschooling has become an alternative to public or private education.

POLICY PLAN

Calhoun County Mission and Vision Statements

Goals and Objectives of Calhoun County Parks and Recreation

Calhoun County Parks and Recreation representative(s) has created the following set of Goals and Objectives to provide a framework for executing the ideals set forth in the County's Comprehensive Plan. These Goals and Objectives should be revisited, and if necessary, modified each year in order to continue to meet the needs of the Calhoun County residents.

Goals and Objectives:

1. Establish a permanent Parks and Recreation Department for Calhoun County
 - Identify the role of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Department
 - Adopt an advisory committee to include:
 - A citizen from each county district area
 - Staff member(s) of the County Parks and Recreation Department
 - Representative(s) of the Calhoun County Council
2. Identify and establish annual funding sources for short and long term maintenance and growth of the county's Parks and Recreation Department
 - Incorporate Parks and Recreation operation budget into Calhoun County's general budget
 - Explore grant opportunities to help fund developments of county parks and recreation facilities and services
 - Include parks and recreation facilities in future Calhoun County infrastructure
3. Outline a strategic plan for the planning, development, and maintenance of the county's parks and recreation facilities and services
 - Identify necessary upgrades to existing parks and recreation facilities
 - Implement facility development efforts within existing county-owned sites
 - Establish land requirements and negotiation criteria for land acquisition for new parks and recreation facilities' development
4. Enhance the quality of life for residents with great recreation services and partnerships
 - Continue to establish partnerships with community groups that promote healthy lifestyles through education, nutrition, physical fitness, and family activities to the county's diverse residents
 - Make community centers and athletic fields more accessible to the residents and visitors of Calhoun County
 - Plan for and promote a better quality of life for current and future residents by providing county-wide recreation services that also attract economic development
5. Provide environmental protection for natural resources within the county
 - Promote environmental education through county parks and schools
 - Partner with local and regional conservation groups to protect valuable land, historical sites, waterways, wetlands, etc...

Public Open Houses Events

The purpose of the public open house is to gain the input of the county's communities that benefit from the county parks and recreation facilities and programs. The annual public open houses are planned and administered by the community district representative with the presence of the advisory committee members.

During the public open house, the participants are introduced to the parks and recreation master plan process, informed about the types of recommendation that maybe offered in relation to the goals and objectives, and provided insight to how the Parks and Recreation Master Plan might positively reach the outlined goals and objectives.

Community Interest Survey

- 1) Does Calhoun County offer the type of recreation **facilities** you would like to see, if not what types of recreational facilities would you like to see in Calhoun County?
- 2) Does Calhoun County offer the type of recreation **services** you would like to see, if not what types of recreational **services** would you like to see offered in Calhoun County?
- 3) How would you like to see open space treated in Calhoun County?

ACTION PLAN

The Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Master Plan serves as a guide for Calhoun County to expand and broaden recreational offerings to the citizens of and visitors to the county. The plan provides detailed, definable recommendations for the establishment and provision of recreational services by Calhoun County. These services will enhance, not compete with, those recreational services currently provided within the county by municipalities, communities and organizations.

Action item recommendations are presented in the following categories:

1. Parks and Recreation Office and Information Center
2. Parks and Recreation Administrative Structural Design
3. Parks and Recreation Funding Sources
4. Strategy for the Implementation of a County-wide Recreation Services