

Funding Recommendations

Although the condition of the national economy at the time that this plan was prepared was rather dismal, economic conditions should begin to improve during the lifespan of this master plan and allow for incremental improvements to funding commitments for parks and recreation projects and programs. The existing deficits in the parks facilities and recreational programs in the county warrant an increased commitment to filling these service gaps. Pender County will continue to experience significant growth in the future, and must work to provide new facilities, maintain existing facilities, and operate a Parks and Recreation department that will continue to grow and expand. In this section of the plan, we examine the current funding sources for parks and recreation and explore new funding sources that would greatly benefit parks and recreation development within Pender County.

Current Funding Sources and Recommendations

The funding sources for Pender County parks and recreation currently include property tax levies, program user fees, state grants, and donations.

As overviewed in the *Budget Analysis and Recommendations* section, the funding committed to parks and recreation development and operations is below average when compared to similar departments in the area and across the state. Per capita funding for parks and recreation in Pender County falls short of the state average, as well as the average of the seven counties surrounding Pender in southeastern North Carolina. Additionally, the per capita average is lower than Class C departments in the state that have similar populations. Revenue generation by parks and recreation is lower than the state average also, largely due to a lack of revenue-generating facilities and programs in the county. Pender County should make a commitment to improving how the county compares in spending and revenue generation as indicated in the Budget Recommendations.

Current Funding Methods

Property Tax

The Parks and Recreation Division, like other Pender County departments, is primarily funded by general fund dollars generated through the county's property tax levy. These funds are allocated to all departments within the county based on historic spending levels and the amount requested by the department for each budget cycle. While the Department of Parks and Recreation was incorporated into the Department of Planning and Community Development at the beginning of the 2009-2010 fiscal year as a division, the Division of Parks and Recreation maintains an operating budget separate from the other divisions within the Department of Planning and Community Development. For the 2009-2010 budget year, the approved operating budget for the Division of Parks and Recreation was \$327,668, which is a 4.9% increase over the prior fiscal year's actual operating budget. In total, \$299,668 will be allocated from the general fund, and the remaining \$28,000 is projected to come from revenue generated by the department from user fees and charges. Additionally during this budget cycle, the county committed \$25,000 from the general fund for initial site work and development of Millers Pond Park; this appropriation was allocated to the Capital Improvement Project budget managed by the Department of Public Works rather than the parks and recreation division.

Program User Fees

The department recovers some of its operating costs through revenue collected by user fees, including program registrations and entry fees. Table 8.1 displays the actual expenses and revenues for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 fiscal years, as well as the appropriated budget and projected revenue generation for FY 2009-10. As mentioned in the budget analysis section, the statewide average of cost recovery for parks and recreation departments is around 13%. In the 2007-08 fiscal year, the department collected over \$34,000 in revenues from user fees, which offset nearly 15% of the actual expenses for that year. The following year, the percent recovered through revenue generated by the department fell sharply to less than 9%. The steep decline can be attributed to the sharp increase in spending during the 2008-09 fiscal year and a decrease in the amount of fees taken in. At the beginning of FY 2009-10, the amount appropriated to the department was

Budget Year	Expenses	Fees Collected	% Recovery
2009-10	\$299,668*	\$28,000*	9.34%*
2008-09	\$287,488	\$24,867	8.65%
2007-08	\$234,035	\$34,612	14.79%
<i>Source: Pender County Finance Department</i>			
<i>*Projected</i>			

\$299,668, and the department is projected to recover 9.34% of these expenses by collecting \$28,000 in revenue during the budget cycle. Again, the department should evaluate the existing user fee schedule and make it an objective to improve the cost recovery of the department. Projected revenue generation should be gradually increased each year, with the goal of a 15% cost recovery through parks and revenue generation by year 2015, and 20% recovery by year 2020. *Budget Analysis and Recommendations* overviews more specifically how this objective may be reached.

Grants

Pender County has had some success in acquiring grant awards for parks and recreation. The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant program has been utilized by Pender County for several years for development of Hampstead Kiwanis Park and Pender Memorial Park. PARTF grants match local government dollar-for-dollar and can be used for acquiring and/or developing parks and recreation projects and facilities. It is recommended that Pender County continue to pursue PARTF funding in the future, as well as concentrate on applying for additional state, federal, and private grant funding. Some potential grant opportunities are listed later in this chapter.

Alternative Funding Methods

Regulatory Tools

A variety of regulatory tools may be used to help develop and maintain parks and recreation facilities including mandatory land dedication for public parks and open space, payments into park development funds in lieu of open space requirements for new development, and right-of-way dedication for greenways and multi-use trails. These regulatory tools are particularly effective in communities that are experiencing significant population growth, such as Pender County.

Land Use Plans, Policies, and Development Regulations for Pender County

Concurrent with the *2010 Pender County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, Pender County also adopted the *Pender County Comprehensive Land Use Plan* and *Pender County Unified Development Ordinance*. Both of these documents serve vital purposes in shaping and regulating the growth and development within Pender County; these documents also coordinate with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to set forth policies and tools for the reservation and development of open space, parks, and other recreational features within the county.

Pender County Comprehensive Land Use Plan

The *Pender County Comprehensive Land Use Plan* is the official land use policy statement for Pender County, and should be used faithfully and consistently to facilitate orderly growth and development. As a roadmap for growth, the plan should be used by county leaders, staff, citizens, and private land owners and developers as the basis for evaluating short-term actions against long-term goals. The plan should be used as a guide in developing and approving land development proposals and for setting capital improvement plans and priorities. Overall, the plan is the major statement of community values that set the framework for achieving a more sustainable future.

The *Pender County Comprehensive Land Use Plan* contains specific policies necessary to achieve eleven categories of goals. The following are the goals and policies found in the Land Use Plan that are relevant to parks and recreation development within Pender County:

Growth Management Goal 1A.1 – Manage the physical growth and development of Pender County by promoting more intensive land uses in key locations identified for such growth while preserving and protecting the unique physical character and social assets of the predominant rural lifestyle and coastal environment that makes the county a unique place to live.

***Policy 1A.1.6** – Use conditional zoning process to enable developers to contribute to addressing the impact of developments on capital facilities and other resources; incorporate regulations into new Unified Development Ordinance to enable a small project to address specific impacts to an existing adjacent community.*

Schools Goal 2C.1 – Ensure adequate enrollment capacity in Pender County Public Schools and encourage co-location of community facilities.

Policy 2C.1.2 – As Pender County Public Schools purchase properties for new schools, consider having other local governments participate in the land purchase in order to co-locate other public facilities, such as parks and libraries, on or near school sites.

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Waterway Access Goal 7A.1 – Ensure adequate, appropriately located parks, recreation, and open spaces to serve the needs of Pender County residents and visitors.

Policy 7A.1.1 – Prepare a new, updated Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Policy 7A.1.2 – Ensure that the updated plan adequately reflects current and future recreation needs. Adopt implementation measures to acquire and develop parks, recreation areas, and open spaces.

Policy 7A.1.3 – Coordinate with Pender County Board of Education and partner with civic groups to co-locate parks and recreation sites on or adjacent to school property as appropriate.

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Waterway Access Goal 7B.1 – Increase the amount of land available and the funding for parks, recreation, and open spaces to serve Pender County residents and visitors.

Policy 7B.1.1 – Adopt regulations requiring construction of appropriate recreational amenities for large residential developments and provide a “fee in lieu of” option to enable the enhancement of amenities of nearby park facilities.

Policy 7B.1.2 – Encourage the use of conservation subdivision development to preserve open amenities within new development.

Policy 7B.1.3 – If practical, require development plans to arrange open space/amenities adjacent to other open space areas, county parks and recreation facilities, or state, federal, or other protected lands.

Policy 7B.1.4 – If adjacency is not possible, require development plans to enable pedestrian and wildlife corridor connections to nearby open spaces.

Policy 7B.1.5 – Ensure that park and recreation set asides include usable upland open space.

Policy 7B.1.6 – Ensure UDO regulations include clearly defined open space standards, which include reasonable and quantifiable areas of open space to be provided outside of wetlands, stormwater ponds, and clustered or community sewage disposal areas.

Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Waterway Access Goal 7C.1 – Increase the number of public boat ramps available within unincorporated Pender County.

Policy 7C.1.1 – Pender County will encourage not only the State of North Carolina, but also area local governments to diligently pursue the acquisition and development of waterfront properties for public use, particularly regarding boating access.

Policy 7C.1.2 – Work with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) Boating Infrastructure Program to identify and acquire land for public boat ramps and ancillary parking facilities to public trust waters.

Policy 7C.1.3 – Consider co-location of other appropriate recreational amenities at future boat ramps.

Pender County Unified Development Ordinance

While the *Pender County Comprehensive Land Use Plan* sets forth the goals and policies to guide development in the county, the *Pender County Unified Development Ordinance* provides the regulations necessary to meet the goals outlined in the Land Use Plan.

Article 6 of the Unified Development Ordinance specifically addresses open space requirements, beginning with *Article 6.18 – Open Space*:

6.18.1 Requirements

- A. Every subdivider of land for residential purposes shall dedicate a portion of such land, as set forth herein, for the purpose of providing, active and passive recreation areas to serve the residents of the immediate neighborhood within the subdivision.
- B. Open Space Areas Can Be Defined By Active Or Passive Open Space As Follows:
 - 1) Active Open Space consists of areas such as park land chosen without regard to natural features for the explicit purposes of enhancing design, such as village commons, or providing space for outdoor recreation activities which may include, but not be limited to, tennis courts, ball fields, swimming pools, and tot lots with play equipment.
 - 2) Passive Open Space areas must consist of undisturbed, unique and sensitive natural features when available, that may include streams, floodplains, wetlands (excluding tidal marsh) conservation resources, and natural heritage areas if identified. These natural spaces will be characterized by undisturbed soils and natural vegetative cover for wildlife habitat. Passive Open space may become part of designated County greenways. Amenities such as walking paths, piers, picnic areas and other passive recreational uses will be allowed with minimal disturbance of the vegetation.
- C. Required Open Space: All new residential subdivisions shall provide open space in the amount of 0.03 acres per dwelling unit within the subdivision. No more than 50% of the required open space shall be designated as passive open space. 50% or more of the required open space shall be designated as active open space.
- D. Exemptions to Open Space
 - 1) Density calculations of a development that is one unit per acre or greater in the RP and RA Zoning Districts.
 - 2) Developments consisting of 10 units or less.
- E. Standards for Park, Recreation and Open Space Areas: Except as otherwise approved by the Planning Board, all park, recreation and open space areas shall meet the following criteria:
 - 1) Unity - The dedicated land shall form a single parcel of land, whether or not the subdivision is developed in phases or sections, except where it is determined by the appropriate governing body, that 2 or more parcels would be in the best interests of the residents of the subdivision and the public; and in such case, the appropriate governing body, may require that such parcels be connected.
 - 2) Shape - The portion of dedicated land to be used for active recreation shall be of such a shape to be usable for active recreational facilities including but not limited to tennis courts, racquetball courts, swimming pools, exercise rooms, clubhouses, athletic fields, basketball courts, swings, slides and play apparatus.
 - 3) Greenways - If open space is a greenway, the land shall be a continuous linear parcel through the subdivision of at least 30 feet in width.
 - 4) Location - The dedicated land shall be located so as to reasonably serve the recreation and open space needs of residents of the immediate neighborhood within the subdivision for which the land dedication is made and can be combined with an adjacent park.
 - 5) Access - All dwelling units in the subdivision shall have suitable, safe, and convenient ingress and egress to and from the park, recreation and open space areas provided within the development by means of improved streets or dedicated walkways. Rights-of-way for such access shall be shown on the preliminary plans and final plats.
 - 6) Required Stormwater Detention/Retention Facilities - Required stormwater detention/retention facilities shall not be accepted to fulfill the requirements set forth by this section. However, the County may allow significant natural water bodies (SNW's) such as lakes and streams to be counted as qualifying active open space provided that public ancillary features such as docks, piers, launching facilities, or paddle trails, or other aquatic amenities are provided. Such facilities shall be reviewed and approved by appropriate state agencies and the Planning Board at the time of Master Plan approval.
 - 7) Landscaping - Park, recreation and open space areas which include amenities such as tennis courts, racquetball courts, swimming pools, exercise rooms, clubhouses, athletic fields, basketball courts, swings, etc. shall be landscaped and shall be provided with sufficient natural or manmade screening or buffer areas to minimize any negative impacts upon adjacent residences
 - 8) Encroachments - The park, recreation and open space areas required by this Article shall exclude roadways, parking areas and other accessory uses except for areas associated with recreational facilities.
 - 9) Consistency with Pender County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan - If any portion of any subdivision proposed for residential development lies within an area designated on the officially adopted Plan as a park, such area shall be included as part of the area set aside to satisfy the requirements of this Article up to the maximum requirement of open space calculations. This area shall be reserved for public use.
 - 10) Procedure for Dedication of Land:
 - a) Designation of Land to Be Dedicated - Subdivider shall designate on the Master Plan, the area or areas to be dedicated pursuant to this Article.
 - i) Review of Land to Be Dedicated - Upon receipt of the Master Plan, the Administrator shall submit a copy thereof to the appropriate governing agency for review. The appropriate governing agency shall submit any and all recommendations concerning the land to be dedicated to the Planning Board at its next scheduled meeting.

- ii) Ownership - The type of ownership of land dedicated for park, recreation or open space purposes shall be selected by the owner, developer, or subdivider, subject to the approval of the Planning Board. Provided, however, any of such areas included in the master parks plan shall be dedicated to the county. The type of ownership may include, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:
 - a. The county, subject to the acceptance by the Planning Board;
 - b. Other public jurisdiction or agencies, subject to their acceptance;
 - c. Appropriate non-profit agencies, subject to their acceptance;
 - d. Property owner, condominium or cooperative associations or organizations.

6.18.2 Recreational Units

All developments not meeting the criteria set forth in Article 6.18.C and contain 34 units or more will be required to provide recreational units equivalent to credits established in the following table. Recreational units are intended to serve the subject development itself but may be suitable or planned to serve the surrounding community. The facilities shall be in a configuration and location that is easily accessible to the dwelling units that they are designed to serve and may be placed within active or passive open space required areas. The design and amount of facilities shall be approved by the Planning Board, Administrator, and Parks and Recreation representative to the TRC at the time of Master Plan approval. Recreational units are assigned a financial unit to be achieved via installation on the subject property or through a payment in lieu of in conjunction with the approved Pender County Parks & Recreation Master Plan. The timing of the installation or payment in lieu of installation shall be confirmed on the master plan.

Dwelling Units	Recreational Unit(s)	Financial Unit
34-99	1.0	\$10,000
100-150	1.5	\$15,000
151-200	2.0	\$20,000
201-250	2.5	\$25,000
251-300	3.0	\$30,000
301-350	3.5	\$35,000
351-400	4.0	\$40,000

*The figures referenced above shall be carried up to 1,000 dwelling units/10.0 recreational units or \$100,000. Developments exceeding 1,000 dwelling units shall not be required to exceed the maximum of 10 recreational units.

6.18.3 Payments in Lieu of Dedication

- A. General Provisions - When the Planning Board determines (upon the recommendation of the Administrator) that the park, recreation and open space requirements of a subdivision of 11-33 lots can be adequately met by capital facilities constructed or to be constructed on county-owned property or property to be acquired by the county within a reasonable time that is located close enough to such subdivision to reasonably serve its residents, the Planning Board may authorize the subdivider to make a payment to the county in lieu of dedication. The Planning Board may also authorize a combination dedication and partial payment in lieu of dedication when such is determined to be in the best interest of the citizens of the area to be served. Any public dedication is subject to review and acceptance by the Planning Board.
- B. Procedure - The subdivider shall include with the application for Master Plan approval, a letter requesting approval to make a payment in lieu of dedication. The letter shall include the proposed per acre value and the basis for the determination of such value. Upon receipt of the Master Plan, the Administrator shall submit a copy thereof with the letter requesting a payment in lieu of dedication to the Planning Board. The Administrator shall submit any recommendations concerning the request to the Technical Review Committee.
- C. Amount of Payment - If the County approves a payment in lieu of dedication, the amount of such payment shall be the product of the number of acres to be dedicated as outlined in subsection (B) above, and twice the average fair market value per acre of the land being subdivided at the time of the submission of the Master Plan. The Tax Department shall determine the average fair market value of the land based on the value of the land for property tax purposes, the information submitted by the subdivider and other relevant information.
- D. Use of Payments in Lieu of Dedication - All monies received by the county pursuant to this Article shall be used only for the acquisition or development of recreation, park, or open space areas that will benefit the new subdivision residents.
- E. Required Payment in Lieu of Dedication - In the event the County finds that a land dedication does not meet the long range plans of the county it shall require payment in lieu of a dedication.
- F. Time of Payment - If a payment in lieu of dedication is authorized, such payment shall be made before recording the final plat for the subdivision. If a subdivision is developed in phases, a payment relating to each phase must be made prior to the recording of a final plat for each phase.

6.18.4 Flexibility in Administration Authorized:

- A. The requirements set forth in this subsection concerning the amount, size, location and nature of park, recreation and open space areas to be provided in connection with residential developments are established by the County as standards that preemptively will result in the provision of that amount of recreational facilities and open space that is consistent with officially adopted county plans. The County recognizes, however, that due to the particular nature of a tract of land, or the nature of the facilities proposed for installation, or other factors, the underlying objectives of this article may be achieved even though the standards are not adhered to with mathematical precision. Therefore, the Planning Board is authorized to permit minor deviations from these standards whenever it determines that: (i) the objectives underlying these standards can be met without strict adherence to them; and (ii) because of peculiarities in the developer's tract of land or the facilities proposed it would be unreasonable to require strict adherence to these standards.
- 1) Whenever the County authorizes some deviation from the standards set forth in this Article, the official record of action taken on the development application shall contain a statement of the reasons for allowing the deviation.

Right-of-Way Dedication

Another regulatory tool that may be considered in Pender County is mandatory right-of-way dedication for multi-use greenway and trail development. With a mandatory right-of-way dedication system in place, as new developments are planned, right-of-way dedications require developers to create greenway corridors by reserving the corridors and in some cases even the development of the proposed greenway or trail. This system may yield incentives for developers, such as density bonuses. While this plan identifies several recommended greenways and bicycle and pedestrian improvements, it is recommended that Pender County develop and adopt comprehensive bicycle/pedestrian plan to further detail the recommended projects that would be suitable for right-of-way dedication.

Wetland Banking

Due to the large amount of wetlands in Pender County, another regulatory tool that may be implemented is the system of wetland banking, which is a system where existing wetlands are purchased and placed under protective covenants and then sold as credits for mitigation of wetland impacts due to development of a different site. This system is advantageous to both developers and government agencies because purchasing credits is often quicker and less expensive than wetland creation, which may cost between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per acre. This system could result in significant potential income to the county as regulatory agencies continue to require increasing amounts of wetland creation for each acre that is impacted due to development.

Naming Rights

A method that is gaining particular popularity in the public sector is naming rights. Naming rights is a system that allows for private entities to have facilities or programs named after them in exchange for a significant donation, such as the WakeMed Soccer Complex in Cary. The cost of developing and operating new parks and recreation facilities in the county may be offset by allowing exclusive naming rights to willing members of the corporate community. For example, a significant donation from a corporate entity such as Sun Drop could offset the cost of a new indoor recreation center, and in exchange the facility would be called the "Sun Drop Recreation Center". The naming rights system could work on other facilities, including individual rooms in community centers, sections of trails and greenways, skate parks, sports complexes, and similar facilities. Alternatively, recreation and parks facilities could be named after a person in exchange for a major donation, such as the "John Doe Community Center." Naming rights have been a successful tool in many markets to offset the cost of parks and recreation facility development and operation. Some facilities in Hampstead Kiwanis Park feature placards identifying significant contributors to the park facilities.



Image 8.1: Naming Rights are currently being used at Hampstead Kiwanis Park and should be expanded to other park facilities in the county.

Development of future facilities and also renovations of existing facilities may benefit from naming rights.

Revenue Bonds

Revenue bonds are a type of funding instrument that are sold on the market with intention to back a planned revenue or specific improvement. These types of bonds are most suitable for backing revenue-generating ventures, and would be most appropriate for funding parks and recreation facilities such as golf courses, aquatics centers, sports venues, and other facilities that will generate revenue for the department. Prior to implementing a bond program, a more thorough analysis of the project that the bond is proposed to fund should be undertaken to assess whether funding by the sale of bonds would be appropriate for the type of facility.

Partnerships

Many parks and recreation departments are now shifting away from being the exclusive provider of facilities and services and moving towards forming partnerships with other organizations and entities to provide parks facilities and recreational programming. Partnerships are often successful when the county is approached by members of the community to develop parks facilities and recreational opportunities that are not specifically identified as priorities in this comprehensive master plan. When developing partnerships, it is imperative that benefits to all parties involved in the arrangement are reciprocal.

The Pender County Parks and Recreation Department currently utilizes many partnerships to provide park facilities and recreational programming, including but not limited to the following organizations:

- Burgaw Dixie Youth
- Topsail Ball Club
- Topsail Girls Softball Organization
- Pender Youth Basketball Association
- Topsail Basketball Association
- Eastern Pender Pop Warner Association
- Pender Youth Football and Cheerleading Association
- Pender Youth Soccer Association
- Port City Soccer Club
- Joint Community Development Center
- Maple Hill Resource Center
- Willard Outreach Organization
- Hampstead Kiwanis Park, Inc.
- Pender County Schools

The existing partnerships have been successful in the past and should continue to benefit the both the parks and recreation department and the partnered organizations. Additional partnerships should be explored, including partnering with local community centers for facility development and recreation programming partnerships.

A review of the partnership with the Pender County school system was being performed during the creation of this plan to allow for conditional public use of the existing and planned school recreational facilities, including ball fields, gymnasiums, tennis courts, etc. The parks and recreation department is currently working with school system staff to develop an agreement for shared use of facilities during non-school periods or when the schools are not using the facilities. This type of partnership should also include the potential use of school grounds for parks and other recreation facilities. Currently, several school sites are feasible for park and recreation development, including Malpass Corner Elementary School and Heide Trask High School.

Grant Opportunities

A plethora of grant opportunities are available for funding assistance for parks and recreation. These grants are available from either federal or state opportunities, or from private foundations and establishments. It is strongly recommended that Pender County Parks and Recreation Staff concentrate more diligently on pursuing these grant opportunities.

Grant writing takes particular knowledge and skill. In the future, it may be beneficial for Pender County to create a position of Grant Writing Specialist to employ a person with a concrete understanding of the grant-writing process as well as the breadth of available grant funding sources. The grants that Pender County could receive as a result of establishing a grant writing specialist position could potentially offset the cost of funding the position in as short as two years. The County must commit to providing matching funds that many grant programs require, however.

The following are some of the possible grant opportunities that may be pursued for parks and recreation funding:

State Opportunities

Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund provides grants to states for conservation and outdoor recreation purposes, and through the states local governments to address "close to home" outdoor recreation needs. Applications must be submitted to the National Parks Service at least 60 days in advance of the proposed acquisition or the beginning of construction except in accordance with retroactivity provisions to allow sufficient time for federal review to determine eligibility and federal compliance. Assistance shall not exceed 50% of the total eligible costs (except as provided for the Insular Areas) and is provided primarily on a reimbursement basis.

Public Beach and Waterfront Access: Grant Program for Local Governments

The Public Beach and Waterfront Access Grant Program is in place to improve pedestrian access to the state's beaches and waterways. Local governments may use access grants to construct low-cost public access facilities, including parking areas, restrooms, dune crossovers and piers. Towns and counties may also use the grants to replace aging access facilities as well as help acquire land for access sites or to revitalize waterfronts. Pre-application must be submitted by January 30, and grantees are then invited by the end of February to submit full application package by mid-April. Matching contributions for acquisition must be at least 15% of the total project cost. For tier 1 & 2 counties and their municipalities, the match must be at least 10%. Grants for improvement must be at least 25%, however for Tier 1 & 2 counties, the match has been reduced to 10%.

North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund is to fund improvements in the state's park system, to fund grants for local governments and to increase the public's access to the states beaches. Awards are given with a \$500,000 maximum and require a 50% local match. Applications are due by 5:00pm to the applicant's regional consultant at Recreation Resources Service.

North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund

Clean Water Management Trust Fund awards may be used for enhancement or restoration of degraded waters, protection of unpolluted waters, creating a network of riparian buffers and greenways for environmental, educational, and recreational benefits. Annual applications are reviewed by 21-member Board of Trustees. The application deadline is February 1. No match is required, but matching is preferred.

Clean Water State Revolving Fund

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund is a revolving loan program designed to assist in the funding of wastewater treatment facilities and projects associated with estuary and nonpoint source programs. Projects are rated based upon the severity of the water quality problem in the project area. The annual application deadline is March 31, and awards require 20% matching funds.

North Carolina DOT Transportation Enhancement Program

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) is an example of a program that could provide grant funding for parks and recreation projects in Pender County. In August 2005, the SAFETEA-LU was signed into law, essentially as a reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The SAFETEA-LU provides monies for various transportation projects, including transportation enhancements and greenways. The components of the SAFETEA-LU that may be most applicable to parks and recreation funding in Pender County include the Transportation Enhancements (TE) and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP).

Various transportation-related projects may be funded through the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program, providing they are related to surface transportation. Examples of projects that are eligible for TE funding include greenways and other recreational trails, as long as the funds utilized from the TE program are utilized for a transportation element of the project.

Of the twelve TE categories, three are most related to greenways and recreational trails. These include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, pedestrian and bicycle safety and educational activities, and conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails. The agency responsible for administering TE funds in North Carolina is the NC Department of Transportation. Transportation Enhancement funds require a 20% match from local funding, and the application cycle is on an annual basis. The NCDOT reports that annual funding for the TE program has historically ranged from \$10 to \$22 million.

North Carolina Safe Routes to Schools Infrastructure Grant Reimbursement Program

Infrastructure grants provide funds for planning, design, and construction. Funding requests may range from \$100,000 to \$300,000 per project. The infrastructure grant program is a cost reimbursement program. This competitive reimbursement program is 100% federally funded – no local match is required. Grant recipients must be able to cover the costs of the project and will be reimbursed during the course of project implementation. All costs submitted for reimbursement are subject to eligibility requirements and must comply with a reimbursement agreement executed between NCDOT and the recipient.

Although no local match is required, applicants are encouraged to leverage their request for SRTS funding with other funding sources that may be available to them, including grant awards, local, state, or other federal funding. However, additional funding is not required, and a lack of such will not penalize an applicant. The SRTS funds may not be used as a match for other federal funding. Also, per the federal guidance for SRTS, this infrastructure program funding cannot be used to replace existing funding sources for pedestrian or bicycle transportation projects.

Adopt-a-Trail Program

The Adopt-a-Trail Program, administered through the North Carolina Trails Program, can be used for trail building, trail signage and facilities, trail maintenance, trail brochures and maps, and other related uses. The award cycle has an annual application deadline in January, and no local match is required.

Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a grant program administered by staff of the State Trails Program of the NC Division of Parks and Recreation. RTP grants may be used to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities, for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. Specifically, funds from the RTP may be used for renovation and maintenance of existing trails, development and renovation of trailhead and trailside facilities, the purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment, construction of new trails, and land acquisition for trail development, with an award preference for projects that connect existing trails, parks, schools, and other community features. The program requires a 25% match from local funding, and applications are accepted on a yearly basis. Maximum award amounts vary on the type of project; the maximum amount awarded for new trail development is \$1,000,000, while the maximum amount awarded for trail renovation is \$75,000. The minimum award granted for projects is \$25,000.

Water Resources Development Project Grant Program

This program is designed to provide cost-share grants and technical assistance to local governments throughout the State. Applications for grants are accepted for seven purposes: General Navigation, Recreational Navigation, Water Management, Stream Restoration, Beach Protection, Land Acquisition and Facility Development for Water-Based Recreation, and aquatic weed control. There are two grant cycles per fiscal year; the application deadlines are July 1st and January 1st.

North Carolina Marine Resources Fund and Endowment Fund

This program is funded from the revenues collected from the state-required coastal recreational fishing license (CRFL), and funds are awarded to projects that manage, protect, restore, develop, cultivate, conserve, and enhance the marine

resources. The annual funding cycle begins on July 1, and a request for proposals is made prior to the beginning of the funding cycle. Applications accepted through August 1, and the program has no cost-share requirement.

Federal Opportunities

Property Management and Disposal Services

The General Services Administration is responsible for promoting effective use of federal real property assets, as well as the disposal of real property that is no longer mission-critical to federal agencies. Any agency or individual is eligible for property acquisition through this program.

North American Wetlands Conservation Grants Program

The North American Wetlands Conservation Grants Program provides matching grants to organizations and individuals to carry out wetlands conservation projects. The program has bi-annual deadlines of March 4 and July 29, and requires a local match of 50% of total grant request.

Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program is designed to assist with the Initial development of a wetlands protection, restoration or management program or enhancement or refinement of an existing program. A 25% local-match is required.

Section 319 NPS Grant Program

Section 319 of the Clean Water Act provides funding of innovative nonpoint source (NPS) management strategies. The NPS Workgroup serves as a selection committee to rank and choose projects for funding. The program has a bi-annual funding cycle, and a match of 40% of the total request is required.

North Carolina Federal Surplus Property Agency

Federal Surplus Property is part of the Division of Surplus Property. The donation program enables certain nonfederal organization to obtain property that the federal government no longer needs. The Federal Property and Administration Services Act of 1949, as amended by Public Law 94-519, provides for the transfer of surplus property to eligible donees within the state of North Carolina.

Healthy People 2010 Community Implementation Grants Program

Over the next ten years, the Federal Department of Health and Human Services plans to award hundreds of “micro-grants” worth up to \$2,010 each to community organizations for activities that support the far-reaching goals of Healthy People 2010, including promoting health education, quality care, access to care, and other projects. Healthy People 2010 is the Nation’s public health agenda for the next decade, and these micro-grants represent a new, low-cost approach to foster effective prevention efforts at the community level.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Annual direct grants from CDBG are awarded to entitlement communities and may be used to revitalize neighborhoods, expand affordable housing and economic opportunities, and/or improve community facilities and services, primarily to benefit lower and moderate-income residents. Development or improvement of public facilities such as sidewalks, streets, water systems, senior citizen centers, sewers, and community centers are all activities that are eligible through Community Development Block Grants.

Other Opportunities

NRPA – CDC ACHIEVE Grant

NRPA receives funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to enhance local communities’ abilities to develop and implement policy, systems, and environmental change strategies that will help prevent or manage health-risk factors for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, obesity, and arthritis. ACHIEVE, now in its third year, is part of a broader Healthy Communities collaborative with the CDC, National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) and the YMCA of the USA. In 2010, NRPA will fund ten park and recreation agencies at \$35,000 each to develop coalitions of local stakeholders and community leaders to address chronic disease risk factors.

With an ACHIEVE grant, agencies will reduce the incidence of chronic disease through policy, systems and environmental change strategies at the local level; create partnerships with community stakeholders; attend meetings with national leaders to learn about tools, resources, and strategies to build healthier communities; create awareness of the vital services parks and recreation offers; and enhance the overall health and livability of their community.

The annual application deadline is December 11, and more information may be found on the National Recreation and Parks Association website: <http://www.nrpa.org/achieve/>

North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund

The North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund has awarded nearly \$39 million in grants over the last eight years to a variety of farm organizations, local and state government agencies, commodity groups, non-profits, and others. The NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission was created by the North Carolina General Assembly to receive and disburse funds from the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) between the state and various cigarette manufacturers. The Commission recognizes that North Carolina's prosperity has been historically supported by agriculture, specifically the tobacco-related segment of agriculture. Through its programs, the Commission seeks to mitigate the general decline in the tobacco-related segment of our economy. Funds are available for the public purpose of alleviating or avoiding unemployment and quantifiable adverse fiscal impacts, stabilizing local tobacco-dependent communities and tax bases and to provide for the optimal use of natural resources.

Eligible projects that Pender County may seek funding assistance for through this program include experimental agriculture programs, community gardens, and farmers markets. Applications are due annually in early December, and award recipients are announced in early May of the following year. More information is available on the program's website: www.tobaccotrustfund.org

US Soccer Foundation Annual Program and Field Grants

The US Soccer Foundation's impact on soccer through its annual Program and Field Grant awards has been significant and continues to grow. Since 1995, nearly \$25 million dollars in cash, equipment, and services have been awarded through the annual grants program. The Foundation's support has benefited more than 500 grantees, covering all 50 states, and has served the entire spectrum of soccer communities from small local clubs to the U.S. Soccer Federation, the National Governing Body for the sport in the United States. Applications are available from August 1-October 15 each year.

US Soccer Foundation Annual Planning Grants

Introduced in the spring of 2007, the US Soccer Foundation's Planning Grants provide funding assistance to develop an initial master plan for proposed soccer field projects. The Foundation offers grants of up to \$10,000 in the form of credit with Clough Harbour Sports, its Partner for Soccer Facility Design and Planning, who will provide successful applicants with a high quality master plan.

Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation Grants

The Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation provides funding, equipment and Quickball grants to youth organizations, schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, local governments, and community non-profit groups that meet our eligibility requirements, as well as promote safe, healthy out of school activities including youth baseball and softball. The Foundation works with invited strategic communities across the country to support their work with disadvantaged youth. All grants are contingent upon the Foundation's federal and state funding.

NIKE Bowerman Track Renovation Program

The Bowerman Track Renovation Program provides matching cash grants to community-based, youth-oriented organizations that seek to refurbish or construct running tracks. The program distributes approximately \$200,000 in matching grants each year.

Recipients of a Bowerman Track Renovation grant are encouraged, but not required, to use Nike Grind technology to resurface their track. Nike Grind material is made of recycled athletic shoes sliced and ground into rubber granules, providing a superior, environmentally conscious all-weather track surface.

USA Football Equipment Grants

As the sport's National Governing Body, and Official Youth Football Development Partner of the NFL and NFL Players Association, USA Football is committed to enhancing the football experience for all at the youth and amateur levels through our Equipment Grants Program.

All NFL Youth Football Fund partner organizations and their local members, clubs, and chapters are now eligible (Amateur Athletic Union; American Youth Football; Boys & Girls Clubs of America; Jewish Community Centers Association; National Police Athletic League; National Recreation & Park Association; Pop Warner; YMCA of the USA). Two types of grants are available: a Youth Football Equipment Grant (retail value approx. \$1,000) and a High School Equipment Grant (retail value approx. \$1,500). The annual application deadline is October 15th.

The Finish Line Youth Foundation

The Finish Line Youth Foundation strives to make a difference in the lives of youth in the communities where employees and customers live, work and play. They accomplish this by being good stewards of the funds they receive and by supporting youth programs that are effective and inclusive. The Finish Line Youth Foundation financially supports opportunities for participation in youth programs that place an importance on youth development and an active lifestyle.

In 2006, the Finish Line Youth Foundation completed a year of mission and process review resulting in the new Mission Statement above and a new focus for giving back to the communities in which we operate our stores. In general, the Youth Foundation supports qualified, non-profit organizations that provide community based access to athletics for kids under the age of 18, as well as camps that give kids the chance to be active, especially camps that provide services to kids who are disadvantaged or disabled.

Applications are accepted on a quarterly basis. The board of directors will meet one month after each quarter to review the qualified grant applications received during that period. The Program Director will make recommendations to the board about which organizations he or she feels best meet the mission of the Foundation, are most qualified to execute the programs for which grants are intended, and have the most impact on the kids and/or the community.

Tony Hawk Foundation Skatepark Grants

Tony Hawk Foundation grants are awarded for the construction of free, public skateparks in disadvantaged communities around the country, and has awarded over \$2-million to 365 communities since 2002. The primary mission of the Tony Hawk Foundation is to promote high-quality, public skateparks in low-income areas throughout the United States. The foundation believes that local officials should treat public skateparks the same way they treat public basketball courts or tennis courts, meaning that anyone may show up and use them anytime, unsupervised. The Tony Hawk Foundation awarded over \$250,000 in grants to 29 communities in the fall of 2007. Grants range from \$1,000 - \$25,000. The deadline to apply for the spring round of funding is March 1, of each year, and the fall cycle deadline is October 1.

Rob Dyrdek/DC Shoes Skate Plaza Foundation

The Safe Spot Skate Spot Program was developed as a subset of the largely successful, Rob Dyrdek/DC Shoes Skate Plaza Foundation. Its main goal exists in the construction of legal, noninvasive places for kids to ride skateboards. Often times, many cities and townships have the desire to create a public skatepark for its community to frequent, but essentially lack funds needed to execute any such large endeavors. Public Skateparks and Skate Plazas are huge undertakings, which require enormous financing, as well as an abundance of land in order to produce the various obstacles to ride upon. While money may be absent, many communities have a wealth of land or free, existing neighborhood space that can easily be designated for the construction of individual street skating obstacles. The Safe Spot Skate Spot Program will take any donated land, regardless of how small or how big and work with the community to turn it into a fully legal, street skateable area for kids to come together and ride harmoniously. The needs of street skateboarders will be met, skateboarder interference with traffic will be eliminated and local residents and businesses will remain undisturbed.

Baseball Tomorrow Fund

The Baseball Tomorrow Fund (BTF) is a joint initiative between Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association that was established in 1999 through a \$10 million commitment by Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association. During the 1999 World Series, Baseball Commissioner Allan H. (Bud) Selig, Players Association Executive Director Donald Fehr and the Baltimore Orioles' Cal Ripken Jr. were on hand to introduce this new grant program for youth baseball and softball.

The Baseball Tomorrow Fund is intended to provide funding for incremental programming and facilities for youth baseball and softball programs, not as a substitute for existing funding or fundraising activities. Baseball Tomorrow Fund generally considers projects that include capital expenditures for youth baseball and softball programs such as baseball/softball equipment and uniforms, basic baseball/softball field renovations and construction (e.g. infield mix, sod/seeding, bases, dugouts, fencing, field lighting, irrigation system, grading, etc.)

The mission of BTF is to promote and enhance the growth of youth participation in baseball and softball throughout the world by funding programs, fields, coaches' training, and the purchase of uniforms and equipment to encourage and maintain youth participation in the game. Grants are designed to be sufficiently flexible to enable applicants to address needs unique to their communities. The funds are intended to finance a new program, expand or improve an existing program, undertake a new collaborative effort, or obtain facilities or equipment. BTF provides grants to non-profit and tax-exempt organizations in both rural and urban communities. BTF awards an average of 40 grants per year totaling more than \$1.5 million annually. The average grant amount is approximately \$50,000. BTF is now funded annually by MLB and the Players Association.

Bikes Belong Grant Program

Since 1999, Bikes Belong has awarded 191 grants to municipalities and grassroots groups in 46 states and the District of Columbia, investing nearly \$1.6 million in community bicycling projects and leveraging close to \$525 million in federal, state, and private funding. The Bikes Belong Grant Program strives to put more people on bicycles more often by funding important influential projects that leverage federal funding and build momentum for bicycling in communities across the United States. These projects include bike paths, lanes, and routes, as well as bike parks, mountain bike trails, BMX facilities, and large-scale bicycle advocacy initiatives.

The Conservation Fund

The American Greenways Kodak Awards Program, administered by The Conservation Fund, provides grants of \$500 to \$2500 to local greenway projects to stimulate planning, design, and development. Applications are due annually in July, and award announcements are typically made in October of each year.

The Global ReLeaf Program

The Global ReLeaf Forest Program is American Forests' education and action program that helps individuals, organizations, agencies, and corporations improve the local and global environment by planting and caring for trees. The program provides funding for planting tree seedlings on public lands, and the program is particularly interested in partnering with private and public sector organizations and agencies to plant trees and improve the environment in projects that would otherwise not be feasible. To date, the project has helped plant more than 23 million trees in more than 500 forest ecosystem restoration projects and urban and community forest projects. The Global ReLeaf projects cover 18,000 acres of land, most of which is considered difficult to plant.

Recently, the Global ReLeaf Program undertook a project close to Pender County. In the Stones Creek Game Land the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission is trying to reestablish the longleaf pine savannah. The project area was originally a longleaf pine ecosystem, but prior to NCWRC ownership it was replaced by slash and loblolly pine plantations and then was clearcut for residential development. Phase 3 of this multi-phase project will plant 63,500 containerized longleaf pine seedlings in the fall of 2009. This project will enhance water quality of the New River watershed, create wildlife habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker, game, and non-game wildlife and provide public recreation opportunities.

Applications for this program are accepted on a continual basis, and more information may be found at the program's website: www.americanforests.org/global_releaf

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation seeks to improve the health and health care of all Americans, including one primary goal to “promote healthy communities and lifestyles.” Specifically, the Foundation has an “Active Living by Design” grant program that promotes the principles of active living, including non-motorized transportation. Many communities across the nation have received grants related to promotion of trails and other non-motorized facilities. More information may be found at the Foundation’s website: www.rwjf.org

National Tree Trust (NTT)

The National Tree Trust has a grant program available that provides a way for communities to beautify themselves, replant a neglected area, or just get some fresh air by planting tree seedlings. The seedlings are available from January through April, and the proposed project must adhere to several requirements including: trees must be planted on public land, projects must use volunteers for planting and/or maintaining seedlings, and two years of annual reporting are required for each grant. Matching funds are required which can include volunteer hours, donated items, and non-federal funding. More information on the NTT program may be found at the website: www.nationaltreetrust.org

Fish America Foundation

The Fish America Foundation provides funding to public and private organizations for projects that conserve or enhance water and fisheries resources. Over the past 18 years, the Foundation has provided over 620 grants for a total of nearly \$5 million to improve the fisheries resources in all 50 states as well as in Canada. Grant awards are typically around \$10,000, and may include projects such as greenways that enhance or conserve water resources. Grant applications must include a letter of support from a state resource agency, and evidence of the organization’s non-profit status. More information may be found on the Fish America Foundation’s website: www.fishamerica.org

AmeriCorps’ National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)

The AmeriCorps’ National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) members have created or improved more than 200 miles of hiking trails in 25 states across the nation, including clearing trees and brush, leveling trails to comply with federal guidelines on handicapped access, implementing erosion control techniques, and creating and updating signs. The project trails are typically located in rural, urban, and national parks, and are used by tens of thousands of Americans each year. More information may be found at the AmeriCorps website: www.americorps.gov

Sticks for Kids Program

Sticks for Kids is an annual program in which park and recreation agencies have the opportunity to apply to receive ten sets of junior golf clubs, access to instruction cards, programming manuals, and ongoing club maintenance. Sticks for Kids provides the tools necessary to give kids a hands-on golf learning experience during after-school activities, sports camps, programs, community events, and school physical education programs. The program not only teaches golf, it empowers youth to success through the life skills associated with golf; integrity, discipline, sportsmanship, etiquette, and respect for self, others and the environment. Best of all, direct access to a golf course is not required so agencies with or without a golf course can take advantage of the Sticks for Kids program. Annual application deadlines are October 30th, and more information may be found on the program website: www.gcbaa.org/sticks_for_kids

Sources for Funding Information

There are many funding sources available other than those listed above. The following resources are helpful to research potential sources of funding:

Grants.gov

Grants.gov is a website for customers to electronically find, apply for, and manage grants. The website includes over 1,000 grant programs offered by the 26 Federal grant-making agencies. www.grants.gov/search/advanced.do

Grants.gov Grant Opportunity Email Subscription

This service allows subscribers to receive notifications about Federal grants in several ways, including by funding number, category or funding activity, funding instrument, eligible applicant, agencies and sub-agencies, and by CFDA number. http://www07.grants.gov/applicants/email_subscription.jsp

Foundations Center's Foundation Finder

The Foundation Finder provides basic information on private and community foundations, and corporate grantmakers in the United States. <http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/foundfinder/>

Foundation Center RFP Bulletin

This weekly bulletin provides an electronic announcement of foundation and corporate funding announcements, including awards for community improvement and development.

N.C. Rural Economic Development Center's North Carolina Rural Funding Directory

This publication compiles more than 100 sources of funding for programs and projects that rural communities may wish to undertake, including parks and recreation related projects. The NC Rural Economic Development Center hopes to update and expand the funding directory every year, which may be found at www.ncruralcenter.org.

Local/State Funding Report, by Thompson Publishing Group

This weekly newsletter provides an update on new grant announcements, legislative and regulatory news, sources of foundation and corporate funding, budget controversies, private sector funding opportunities, program updates, and online access. <http://www.thompson.com/public/sitedocs/order.jsp>

NC Open Notebook

The website lists North Carolina state government grant and financial assistance programs and awards that have been made. Users may search for grants by agency, recipient, grant program, or location, as well as search for contracts by agency, vendor, contract, or location. <http://www.ncopenbook.gov/grants/default.aspx>

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)

The CFDA is a government-wide compendium of federal assistance programs. www.cfda.gov

Funding Recommendations Summary

As mentioned in the previous section, the funding allocated from the general fund to parks and recreation in Pender County is relatively low when compared on a total and per capita basis to similar departments in the region and the state. Again, it is imperative that the recommendations in the last section be implemented in order to bring the Pender County parks and recreation budget up to par so that the department may be poised to provide parks facilities and recreational opportunities as the county's population continues to grow.

- The department should also develop a fees and charges policy that can be applied to the existing programs, as well as new programs as they are created. The policy should clearly address the level of general funds that will be used to fund each program, and also set revenue generating goals for individual programs, as well as the department as a whole.
- The department should explore hosting more special events such as marathons, triathlons, and sports tournaments that require entry fees. Such special events may be significant revenue generators for the department, and potentially increase tourism and revenues from sales tax in the county. Special events that are not sponsored or joint-facilitated by the county should cover all costs associated with operating the facilities, and should generate revenue over that cost. The department should also look at the current rates for facility rental and the true cost of operations, including field maintenance, lighting, trash collection, and other expenses to determine if current rates are adequate.
- The department should examine existing partnerships and continue to explore new partnership. By strengthening relationships with local agencies, other departments, schools, non-profit groups, and other organizations, the parks and recreation department may be able to provide services through allied partners and reduce costs. Agreements between the parks and recreation department and these external organizations should be outlined in the form of intergovernmental agreements (IGAs), memorandums of understanding (MOU), memorandums of agreement (MOA), or other similar agreements so that each party involved clearly understands their roles and responsibilities.
- The department should significantly increase grant applications to use existing funds as potential matches. Grants have been and will continue to be a beneficial and credible funding source for parks and recreation projects. A tremendous amount of grant opportunities exist from the state and federal governments, as well as the private sector, as overviewed above, and the department should concentrate on seeking out and applying for these grants as a supplement to the capital funding for the department rather than a primary revenue source.
- The department should consider financing fee-based facilities with revenue bonds, a naming rights program, a wetland banking program, and funding through regulatory tools. All of these tools are an additional method to generate additional capital funding for the department, as well as increase the department's sustainability.