

Demographic Profile

In order for a county to identify its parks and recreation needs, it is necessary to understand the county's current and future park users through a thorough review and analysis of the county's demographics. By clearly understanding the makeup of the current park users, as well as how the county's growth patterns and demographic trends will affect the composition of the future park users, the county may properly create a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to ensure that park and recreation development will address the needs of the residents of Pender County.

Pender County's geographical makeup is unique in that there is not one large city that dominates growth patterns, but rather several small-sized towns and unincorporated areas, each with its own demographic profile. The coastal area of the county is comprised of the beach-front communities of Topsail Beach and Surf City, as well as the unincorporated area of Hampstead. The Town of Topsail Beach was incorporated in 1963, and had 5.8 square miles within its corporate limits in the 2000 Census. Topsail Beach had a population of 471 in the 2000 Census, and in 2007 the estimated population had grown to 573, a 22% population increase. The Town of Surf City was incorporated in 1949, and had 5.3 square miles within its corporate limits in the 2000 census. Surf City experienced a 30% population increase from 2000 to 2007, increasing from 1,393 to 1,913 during that time period. Hampstead is an unincorporated area located on US Highway 17, nearly eighteen miles from the City of Wilmington. Hampstead has historically been a rural agricultural and fishing community; however, the area has had significant residential and commercial growth in recent years.

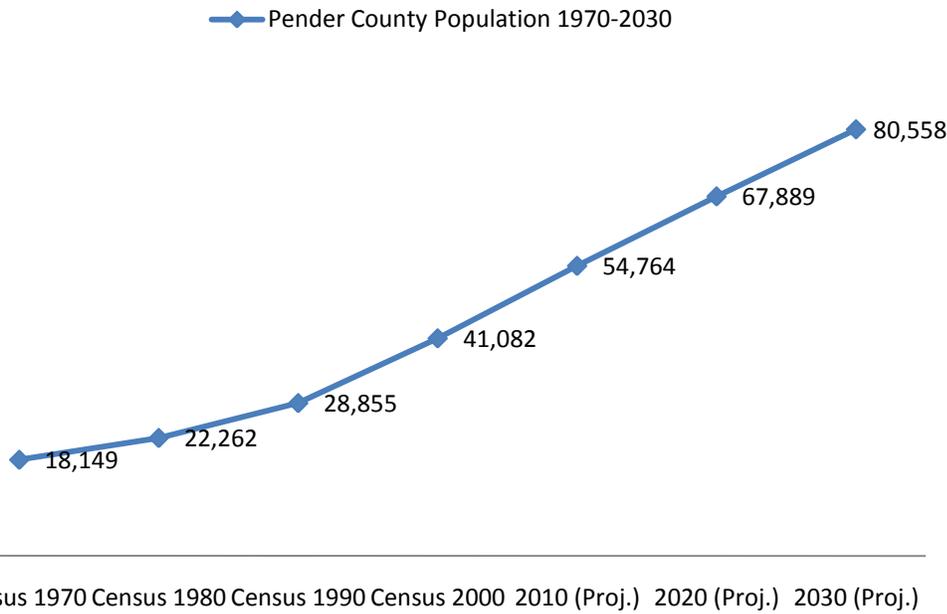
The inland areas of the county include many populated places, both incorporated and unincorporated. The Town of Burgaw is the county seat and located in the center of the county. Burgaw was incorporated in 1879, and had approximately 3.5 miles within its corporate limits in the 2000 census. Burgaw has experienced a 22% population increase from 2000 to 2007, with an estimated 2007 population of over 4,000. The Village of St. Helena incorporated in 1921 and had 5.7 square miles within its corporate limits in the 2000 census. From 2000 to 2007, St. Helena's population grew 24% to 489. The Town of Watha is located north of Burgaw, and was incorporated in 1875. Watha reported 0.9 square miles within its corporate limits in 2000, and experienced a 36% population increase from 151 to 205 during the time period from 2000 to 2007. The Town of Atkinson is located near the western boundary of Pender County, and was incorporated in 1883. In the 2000 Census, Atkinson had approximately 1.0 square miles within its corporate limits, and reported a population of 236 in 2000, which only increased by 4 people from 2000 to 2007. The county's unincorporated inland areas are significantly geographically dispersed, and include, among others, Currie, Malpass Corner, Maple Hill, Penderlea, Rocky Point, Scotts Hill, and Willard.

Collectively, Pender County's demographic profile is unique and interesting. It is important to understand each of the individual areas within the county to best plan for future parks and recreation facilities. Pender County is poised for significant growth, and by observing historical growth trends as well as the characteristics of the population, the county will be able to adequately plan to meet the parks and recreation needs of present and future Pender County residents and visitors. Additionally, it is recommended that subsequent updates to this plan take into consideration future available data, including the 2010 Census.

Population Trends

Pender County has been one of the fastest growing counties in North Carolina, catalyzed in part by the county's proximity to the fast growing City of Wilmington, as well as the increasingly desirable coastal areas along the Atlantic Ocean. Since 1990, Pender County has seen impressive growth, as strongly demonstrated by the dramatic growth rates of the incorporated areas within the county. The towns of Burgaw, Surf City, and Watha experienced growth rates of 125%, 97%, and 107% from 1990 to 2000, respectively, while St. Helena and Topsail Beach showed moderate growth rates of 52% and 65% during the decade. The Town of Atkinson experienced a slight decrease in population of 3.6% during this time period. Pender County as a whole showed an impressive population growth of 42.3% from 1990 to 2000. Figure 2.1 shows the growth of the county using combined estimates from the US Census and projections from the NC State Data Center.

Figure 2.1: Pender County Population, 1970-2030



Source: US Census (www.census.gov) and NC State Data Center (<http://sdc.state.nc.us>)

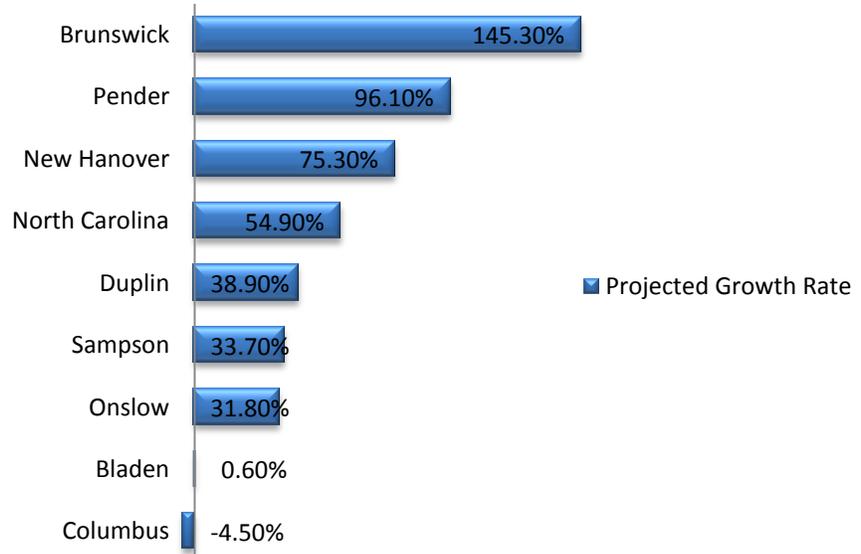
The data shown in Figure 2.1 also shows the significant population growth in the county’s history. Pender County experienced a staggering growth rate of 85% from 1980 to 2000, almost doubling the population from 22, 262 to 41, 082 people. By observing the strong growth in Pender County over recent history, it is easy to understand why the NC State Data Center projects population growth for the County at the 11th highest in North Carolina at 96.1% from 2000 to 2030. If the prediction is correct, Pender County will increase from the 58th most populated county in the state to 39th by the year 2030.

Comparison with Surrounding Counties

Pender County is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the eastern side and seven counties on the landward sides, including Onslow, New Hanover, Brunswick, Columbus, Bladen, Sampson, and Duplin Counties. Figure 2.2 compares the projected growth rates for Pender County with its surrounding counties and the state, and shows that Pender County is projected to experience above-average growth rates for the region, as well as the entire state.

While Brunswick County’s projected growth rate of 145.30% is significantly higher than the 96.10% projection for Pender County, both counties are projected for substantial growth. The two counties are similar in that they both have been traditionally rural agricultural-based communities but have become increasingly popular for new residents, desired in part for the geographic proximity to coastal resources, as well as increasing development pressure from the urban hub of Wilmington and New Hanover County.

Figure 2.2: Projected Growth Rates for Pender and Surrounding Counties



Source: NC State Data Center (<http://demog.state.nc.us>)

Population by Age

Understanding the population composition by age is an important tool for planning the recreational programming for Pender County. Table 2.1 indicates which segments of the population will experience growth and which segments will decline. By evaluating the data shown in Table 2.1, it is clear that Pender County is a family-friendly place, with over 24% of the population being composed of children, youth, and teens in 2008.

Table 2.1: Population Trends by Age							
	2000	2008	% Change	2018	% Change	2028	% Change
Pender County	41,252	51,834	25.65%	68,223	31.62%	84,372	23.67%
Age Group							
0 to 4	2,408	2,666	10.71%	3,873	45.27%	4,709	21.59%
5 to 14	5,539	6,075	9.68%	7,320	20.49%	9,681	32.25%
15 to 19	2,540	3,770	48.43%	4,158	10.29%	4,949	19.02%
20 to 24	2,136	3,418	60.02%	4,434	29.72%	4,853	9.45%
25 to 34	5,358	6,207	15.85%	9,761	57.26%	12,050	23.45%
35 to 44	6,748	7,606	12.71%	8,743	14.95%	12,245	40.05%
45 to 54	6,006	7,948	32.33%	9,800	23.30%	10,896	11.18%
55 to 64	4,692	6,479	38.09%	9,093	40.35%	10,804	18.82%
65 to 74	3,528	4,393	24.52%	6,498	47.92%	8,736	34.44%
75 to 84	1,827	2,469	35.14%	3,345	35.48%	4,792	43.26%
85+	470	803	70.85%	1,198	49.19%	1,612	34.56%
Preschool (0 to 4)	2,408	2,666	10.71%	3,873	45.27%	4,709	21.59%
Youth (5 to 14)	5,539	6,075	9.68%	7,320	20.49%	9,681	32.25%
Teens (15 to 19)	2,540	3,770	48.43%	4,158	10.29%	4,949	19.02%
Adults (20 to 54)	20,248	25,179	24.35%	32,738	30.02%	40,044	22.32%
Senior (55+)	10,517	14,144	34.49%	20,134	42.35%	25,944	28.86%

Source: NC State Data Center (www.osbm.state.nc.us)

Table 2.1 indicates that each age group is projected to increase by 2028. Youth, which are considered the heaviest users of the park and recreation programs, will increase by nearly 60% from 6,075 in 2008 to 9,681 in 2028. Parks and recreation opportunities for youth including league soccer, baseball, and football playing fields and programming must be planned to accommodate the increase. Additionally, an increase in the numbers of preschool aged children of nearly 77% will require adequate planning for new playgrounds within the county. Adults, ages 20 to 54, will increase 59% to over 40,000. The senior population is also expected to exhibit a significant increase in population, increasing 83% from 14,144 to almost 26,000 in 2028. As these baby boomers age, parks and recreation departments are challenged with providing parks and recreation opportunities that adequately meet these users' needs. The seniors can be categorized as either active or sedentary; active seniors generally participate in sports such as tennis, golf, hiking, and bicycling, while less active or sedentary seniors prefer educational opportunities, day trips, and passive park activities such as concerts.

As a percentage of the overall population measured from 2000 to 2028 projections, the preschool, youth, teens, and adults all remain relatively steady. The seniors, however, will increase their percentage of the total population by 3.46% to 30.75% by 2028.

Population by Zip Code

Pender County has a total of 71 “populated places” according to NC HomeTownLocator (<http://northcarolina.hometownlocator.com/nc/pender/>) and 8 zip codes. The zip codes are represented in Table 2.2 by their population, density of person per acre, median household income and median age. It should be noted that this table does not reflect all of the zip codes in Pender County, as several zip codes used in the county are shared with areas in neighboring counties, including 28466 (Angola Bay area) and 28411 (Scotts Hill/Sidbury Road area).

Zip Code	Nearest Community	2000 Population	Density	Median Household Income	Median Age
28421	Atkinson	1,419	23.9	\$35,294	39.4
28425	Burgaw	9,483	62.7	\$30,722	37
28435	Currie	2,378	25.7	\$25,727	35.3
28443	Hampstead	11,594	85.7	\$44,542	43.1
28454	Maple Hill	2,544	23.9	\$30,222	35.9
28457	Rocky Point	8,047	46.1	\$32,297	34.7
28445	Topsail Beach	4,717	49.3	\$36,311	41.0
28478	Watha	2,257	37.9	\$26,607	38.3
Pender County		41,082	47	\$35,902	38.8

Source: NC HomeTownLocator (<http://northcarolina.hometownlocator.com/nc/pender/>)

Table 2.2 is useful for analyzing the character of each zip code area. The areas in the coastal region of the county, including Topsail Beach and Hampstead areas, have higher than average income levels and median ages, as well as higher population densities. The coastal region of the county is an attraction for persons in higher ages with above average incomes. Rocky Point and Burgaw are very similar in

that both indicate population concentration centers, with higher densities. The Rocky Point zip code area boasts the lowest median age based on zip code in the county, indicating that this may be an attractive area for young couples and families. The Atkinson and Maple Hill areas show an identical population density number of 23.9 persons per square mile, significantly lower than the county average and typical for the rural characteristics of these areas.

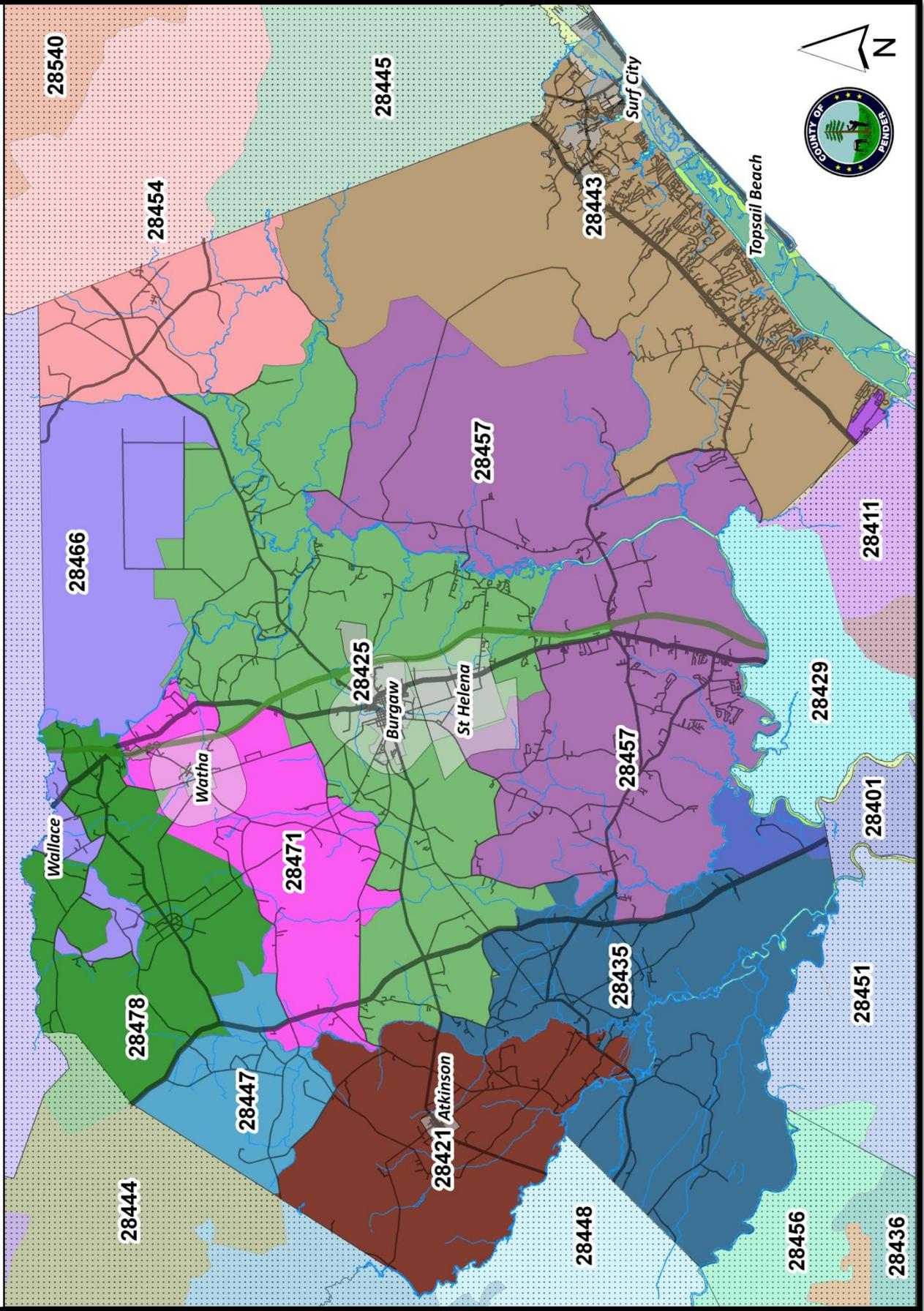
Households by Income

Observing annual household income within the population of the county is important when considering potential user fees for parks and recreation opportunities, as well as possible additional tax levies that may be imposed on the citizens for parks and recreation funding. The average income of households in Pender County reported in the 2005 to 2007 American Community Survey by the US Census Bureau was \$50,262. Compared to the national 2008 averages of \$68,293 and the state 2008 average of \$59,181, it is apparent that income in Pender County is catching up to the state average, although still somewhat behind. Both the Pender County and state averages are significantly behind the national average, and this should be taken into consideration when calculating proposed user fees for parks and recreation.

Total Households	19,107
Less than \$10,000	8.7%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	6.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	12.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	13.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	18.8%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	9.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	7.4%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1.4%
\$200,000 or more	1.0%
Median income (dollars)	41,845
Mean income (dollars)	50,562

Source: US Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey (www.census.gov)

Figure 2.3: Zip Codes for Pender County and Surrounding Areas



Ethnic Profile

The ethnic composition of Pender County is similar to that of the entire state of North Carolina, although Pender County is not quite as diversified as the state. Table 2.4 compares the racial composition of Pender County and North Carolina. Pender County's most prevalent race is Caucasian persons, composing nearly 80% of the entire population. African-American persons comprise a significant portion of the population at nearly 20%, and persons of Hispanic or Latino origin make up nearly 5%. Table 2.5 shows the racial composition of the population by zip code. As depicted in the table, the racial diversity of Pender County's population varies greatly by geographical region. The coastal areas of the county are significantly less diverse than the inland areas. Topsail Beach and Hampstead areas have

	Pender County	North Carolina
Caucasian persons	78.4%	74.0%
African-American persons	19.7%	21.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons	0.5%	1.2%
Asian persons	0.4%	1.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	<0.5%	0.1%
Persons reporting two or more races	0.9%	1.1%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin	4.9%	7.0%
White persons not Hispanic	74.2%	67.5%

Source: US Census Bureau (www.census.gov)

Zip	Nearest Community	Caucasian	African-American	Hispanic	Other
28421	Atkinson	59.1%	36.8%	2.9%	1.2%
28425	Burgaw	60.6%	34.4%	4.1%	0.9%
28435	Currie	54.3%	40.7%	3.2%	1.8%
28443	Hampstead	89.5%	8.6%	1.4%	0.5%
28454	Maple Hill	52.2%	45.8%	1.6%	0.4%
28457	Rocky Point	72%	20.1%	7.1%	0.8%
28445	Topsail Beach	93.7%	3.5%	1.8%	1%
28478	Watha	59.4%	35.8%	4%	0.8%

Source: US Census Bureau (www.census.gov)

large percentages of persons of Caucasian origin and fewer persons of African-American, Hispanic, or other origins. The rural communities of Currie, Maple Hill, and Watha show a higher level of diversity, with larger percentages of the population being represented by non-Caucasian persons. Rocky Point has the highest percentage of persons of Hispanic origin at 7.1%, and the towns of Burgaw and Watha are represented by around 4% Hispanic populations. Observing the racial composition of Pender County's population as a whole and by geographic area is important because the diversity may present unique recreational needs.

Transportation

Occupied housing units	19,107	100%
No vehicles available	966	5.1%
1 vehicle available	5,914	31.0%
2 vehicles available	7,390	38.7%
3 or more vehicles available	4,837	25.3%

Source: US Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey (www.census.gov)

Table 2.6 displays the availability of vehicles at occupied housing units in Pender County. Nearly 95% of the county's population has at least one vehicle available, while around 64% of households have 2 or more vehicles. 5.1% of the respondents reported having no vehicle available in their household. Pender County currently does not have a public transportation system; however, park planning should address the public transportation access to recreation facilities. A well-planned network of greenways, trails, and bicycle lanes can also provide a route to parks and recreation facilities, as well as link together schools, shopping opportunities, and residential communities.

Employment and Education

Table 2.7: Workforce Composition by Industry in Pender County

Civilian employed population 16 years and over	20,821	100%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	347	1.7%
Construction	3,412	16.4%
Manufacturing	2,419	11.6%
Wholesale trade	883	4.2%
Retail trade	3,266	15.7%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	879	4.2%
Information	327	1.6%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	1,250	6.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	1,569	7.5%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	3,591	17.2%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation, and food services	1,268	6.1%
Other services, except public administration	725	3.5%
Public administration	885	4.3%
<i>Source: US Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey (www.census.gov)</i>		

Table 2.7 shows the workforce composition of Pender County's population. The largest percentage of people are employed within the educational services, health care, and social services sectors, many of which are employed by the county's largest employer Pender County Board of Education. Retail trade and construction sectors also employ significant percentages of the population at 15.7% and 16.4% respectively. Many county residents also work in the manufacturing industry, at nearly 12%. Surprisingly, only 1.7% of respondents reported to be employed in the agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining industries; Pender County has traditionally been an agriculture-based community.

In Table 2.8, the educational attainment of the county's 25 year old and older residents is displayed. Pender County has a higher percentage of high school graduates at 37.8% than either North Carolina or the U.S., at 30.10% and 30.60% respectively. Over 18% of the respondents reported not attaining a high school diploma or equivalent, and less than 4% of the respondents possess a graduate or professional degree.

Table 2.8: Education Attainment for Pender County Population

Population 25 years and over	33,355	100%
Less than 9th grade	2,084	6.2%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	4,002	12.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	12,604	37.8%
Some college, no degree	6,637	19.9%
Associate's degree	2,775	8.3%
Bachelor's degree	3,993	12.0%
Graduate or professional degree	1,260	3.8%
Percent high school graduate or higher	81.8%	(X)
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	15.7%	(X)
<i>Source: US Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey (www.census.gov)</i>		

Annual Building Permits

Analyzing the amount of annual building permits issued in the county is a way to assess housing market trends. Pender County had an overall growth in residential building permits of 18% between 2001 and 2008. Growth spiked 195% in 2004 and continued to increase another 19% in 2005. The county experienced dramatic decreases in building permits in 2006 and 2008, which reflect the slowing economy. Table 2.9 overviews the amounts and types of building permits issued within Pender County from 2000 to 2008.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Units	200	206	227	447	663	793	448	454	253
Units in Single-Family Structures	200	206	227	433	637	773	448	454	253
Units in All Multi-Family Structures	0	0	0	14	26	20	0	0	0
Units in 2-unit Multi-Family Structures	0	0	0	2	14	8	0	0	0
Units in 3- and 4-unit Multi-Family Structures	0	0	0	12	7	12	0	0	0
Units in 5+ Unit Multi-Family Structures	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0

*Source: HUD – SOCDS Building Permits Database
(<http://socds.huduser.org/permits/index.html>)*

Summary

Pender County has experienced impressive growth over the past several decades, and is projected to continue experiencing similar growth in the future along with the other counties in the area. In Pender County, it is projected that the age groups of Preschool (0 to 4), Teens (15 to 19), and Adults (20 to 54) are projected to grow very near to the average of the entire county's growth rate while the age groups of Youth (5 to 14) and Senior (55+) are expected to grow at moderately above-average rates. Both of these groups are significant users of parks and recreation facilities, and it is imperative to plan for the increase in population of these age groups. Pender County's demographics are diversified significantly by geographical area, and it is important to understand that diverse demographics warrant diverse parks and recreation opportunities. The annual income levels in Pender County households are lower than the state and national averages, an important statistic to consider when examining potential user fees and tax levies that may be imposed for parks and recreation funding.

Pender County will continue to grow at a variety of levels including population, average household income, and education. As the county's population grows and morphs, it is important to periodically revisit these statistics in an effort to analyze how the needs of Pender County parks and recreation users are being met.