Parks & Recreation
2018 ANNUAL REPORT

FORSYTH COUNTY, GEORGIA
The mission of Forsyth County Parks and Recreation is to enhance the quality of life for all citizens of Forsyth County by providing passive and active recreational, educational and cultural programming services and to provide parks and recreational facilities that are safe, accessible and aesthetically pleasing to the entire community.

### Department Overview

#### Mission

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#### Department Divisions

**Administration Division** led by the department director is responsible for the overall operations of the Department. This division oversees department policies, budget, marketing, personnel and park rentals.

**Athletic Division** manages all youth and adult athletic programs. Adult programs include basketball, flag football, softball and soccer. Youth programs include baseball, basketball, cheer leading, football, lacrosse and soccer.

**Marketing and Community Relations Division** creates, directs and implements marketing and community relations strategies and oversees volunteer coordination, corporate sponsorship and advertising, special event permitting and the national accreditation process.

**Natural Resource Division** manages 13 natural resource parks including Big Creek Greenway, Shady Grove Campground, natural surface trails and lake parks. This division also oversees nature and adventure programming.

**Park Operations Division** manages and maintains 12 active/athletic parks.

**Recreation Division** manages three recreation centers and provides recreation programs for youth and adults. Programs include special events, fitness, camps, tennis, art, gymnastics, martial arts, dance, therapeutic recreation programs and special interest classes.

- 76 full-time employees
- 176 part-time employees and seasonal employees
- 15 Certified Parks and Recreation Professionals
- 3 Certified Pool Operators

- 1 Certified Parks and Recreation Executive
- 1 Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist
- 1 Certified Playground Safety Inspector
Complete planned development projects.

Provide an exceptional level of service to department divisions in terms of fiscal management, human resources and customer service.

Implement a comprehensive Marketing & Community Relations Plan that enhances Forsyth County Parks & Recreation’s ability to increase awareness, revenue, participation, and public communication.

The Athletic Division will provide recreational programs, and competitive tournaments on safe, well-maintained facilities for County residents while also creating opportunities for economic impact.

Provide staff with professional training and development and develop and maintain the newest active parks, Matt and Lanierland Parks.

Provide affordable educational and recreation opportunities to residents that encourage preservation conservation and stewardship of natural resources.

Ensure safety and function of park sites and equipment.

Increase the awareness of leisure opportunities, improve upon the quality and quantity of recreation programs and provide the safest facilities and programming as possible.
Major Accomplishments

Received the Georgia Recreation and Park Association Agency of the Year Award

The award was presented to five population groups within the state, with Forsyth County falling into the largest population category – 150,000 and over. The agency of the year award recognizes agencies for staff development, budgeting and resources, facilities offered and major accomplishments made within the last year as well as new and outstanding programs offered.

Opened New trails in Two Parks

New natural surface trails were added to Lanierland Park and Matt Community Park. The trail at Lanierland Park is an out and back route that is 2.6 miles long allowing for walking and jogging. The trail meanders through open fields, tree covered areas and alongside a creek. The trail at Matt Community Park features stacked loops that total 3.06 miles allowing for walking, jogging and mountain biking. The trail meanders through woods and along a pond. The trail at Lanierland Park was constructed by Aaron Steel and Associates and the trail at Matt Community Park was constructed by Reliant Construction Inc. Both trails were funded by the 2008 Parks & Recreation Greenspace Bond and impact fees.

New Park Land Acquired

The county purchased 81 acres of land in Southwest Forsyth County for a new park that will be called Denmark Park. This park will be master planned as a community park and will serve a highly populated area. The purchase of this property aligns with the action items in the Forsyth County Parks & Recreation 2016 Comprehensive Master Plan Update.

Braille Trail Completed at Fowler Park

The braille trail was installed at Fowler Park in April. The trail is 200 yards in length and has eight braille signs with two sensory gardens. This project began in early 2017 and was made possible by the Forsyth County Lions Club in partnership with a 4th grade class from Kelly Mill Elementary School. The trail has guide ropes on the right side for visually impaired individuals to navigate the trail. Braille signs are placed along the trail with information about Forsyth County, Fowler Park, the Forsyth County Lions Club and the sensory gardens. The sensory gardens were installed by students from Kelly Mill Elementary School to provide sensory stimulation as well as to provide a habitat for the endangered Monarch butterfly.
The department was extremely proud to host the Triple Crown National Fast Pitch Softball Tournament (14u, 16u and 18u) in the summer. The tournament brought 144 national teams from 25 states with a total of 5040 total visitors to Forsyth County parks. The championship games were televised live on ESPN 3 at Fowler Park. The revenue to our department was approximately $ 19,000 for the tournament and the economic impact to our community was tremendous.

In January, the department established a significant partnership with the Coca-Cola United Bottling Company. The partnership provides the department with financial support and commissions on products sold in the park in exchange for exclusive rights for the sale of Coca-Cola products. The parks also receive free beverage equipment and marketing supplies.

The Forsyth County Parks Foundation was re-engaged this past fall after having been inactive for five years. The foundation functions to support and raise funds for parks & recreation entities in Forsyth County. The mission of the Foundation is to promote healthy active lives by providing awareness and financial support for Forsyth County Parks & Recreation. Currently, the foundation provides scholarship funding for children and manages the commemorative program. They completed a strategic plan this year, developed a website and will be continuing to increase awareness about the organization.

A bike skills park opened at Haw Creek Park on Saturday, Oct. 27 as part of the Haw Creek Bike Fest. The bike skills park is an area designed specifically for riders between the ages of 3-11 and features a pump track, tot track and technical trail features that are found on most mountain biking trails. The bike skills park was funded by SPLOST VII funds as well as a donation from the Forsyth County Parks Foundation made in honor of Daniel Brunick.
Park Improvements

CENTRAL PARK
CHATTahoochee Pointe
COAL MOUNTAIN PARK
FOWLER PARK
HAW CREEK PARK
MIDWAY PARK
OLD ATLANTA PARK

Improvements to baseball fields and disc golf tee boxes
Improvements to parking lot and canoe/kayak launch
New park sign and scoreboards, resurfaced tennis courts
Added rubberized surface to playgrounds
Added a swing set and bike park
New park sign and resurfaced tennis courts
Replaced spray pad surfacing

Special Events

JANUARY
APRIL
APRIL
JUNE
SEPTEMBER
OCTOBER
OCTOBER
OCTOBER
DECEMBER

Get Fit Forsyth Challenge
Community Yard Sale
Sawnee Mtn Pres Spring Fling
Day Care Fun Day
Play at the Park Festival
Future Olympian Track Meet
Community Yard Sale
Haw Creek Bike Fest
Santa's Calling
New Programs

Culinary Arts Camp
The department partnered with the school system to offer a one-week Culinary Arts Camp and there were 76 kids who participated. This response was overwhelming, and we plan to offer more sessions next summer. This program generated $22,800 in revenue.

Robotics Program
This program encourages young minds to explore the world of robotics technology. The curriculum is based on (NGSS) Next Generation Science Standards. Students designed, built, and programmed an autonomous robot and also learned STEM concepts in this program.

Holistic Arts
This thirteen-week program was held to help individuals understand that living a healthy lifestyle is a mindful journey, not a destination. Each session discussed different topics such as Environment and DNA, Essential Oils, Chakras and Auras, Meditation, Hypnosis and Life Coaching.

Playball
Playball uses the medium of sports, not only to improve gross motor development, increase concentration skills, build low muscle tone, teach children to be competent in hand-eye/foot-eye coordination and improve balance; but sport is also used to teach basic, yet essential life skills. communication, responsibility, and countless other attributes. We address the needs of the whole child – dealing with the emotional, social, cognitive and physical. The program teaches the fundamental skills in soccer, basketball, tennis, baseball, hockey, and much more.

Stand Up Paddle Board
The department began offering stand up paddle board lessons on Lake Lanier. Experienced instructors teach participants about stand up paddle board safety, equipment, proper clothing, getting on the board, proper stance and positioning, paddle strokes and turning, and falling and recovery techniques.

Therapeutic Recreation Program
In the Spring, the department created a new program section in the recreation division specifically focused on therapeutic recreation (TR). The overall goal of the TR program is to provide recreation programs to citizens with disabilities and special needs in Forsyth County. The purpose of the program is to improve the participants physical, emotional, cognitive and social skills as well as to help them develop a connection to the community and a lasting healthy and active life style. The immediate objectives of the program, after hiring staff in March, was to develop a summer camp program and implement instructional and social programs. Long-term, the goals are to develop a wide variety of programs serving children, teenagers, young adults, adults and seniors within different disability groups. In the first two months of programming, the TR program offered five weeks of summer camp and 37 instructional and social programs.

Mountain Biking Camp
A new Mountain Biking Camp was offered this summer for children ages 12-15. Certified International Mountain Biking Association guide instructors created a positive, fun and enriching environment where campers safely improved their mountain bike riding skills. Campers learned proper braking, shifting, body position, trail etiquette, safety, and basic bike maintenance. Campers rode trails in Cherokee County, Fulton County and Forsyth County. Ten children took part in this exciting active camp!
- 2819 acres
- 100 campsites
- 84 athletic fields
- 50 trail miles
- 45 picnic pavilions
- 36 tennis courts
- 21 playgrounds
- 7 outdoor basketball courts
- 4 lake parks
- 3 recreation centers
- 1 skate park
- 1 track and field
- 1 visitor center
- 1 volleyball court
- 1 disc golf course
- 1 spray pad
2018 Statistics

1.7M Park Visitors

214,222 Recreation Center Visitors

37,204 Program Participants

31,563 Visitors to Sawnee Mountain Preserve Visitor Center

6,054 Event Rentals