

FORK CREEK MOUNTAIN PARK

Master Plan Report

July, 2010



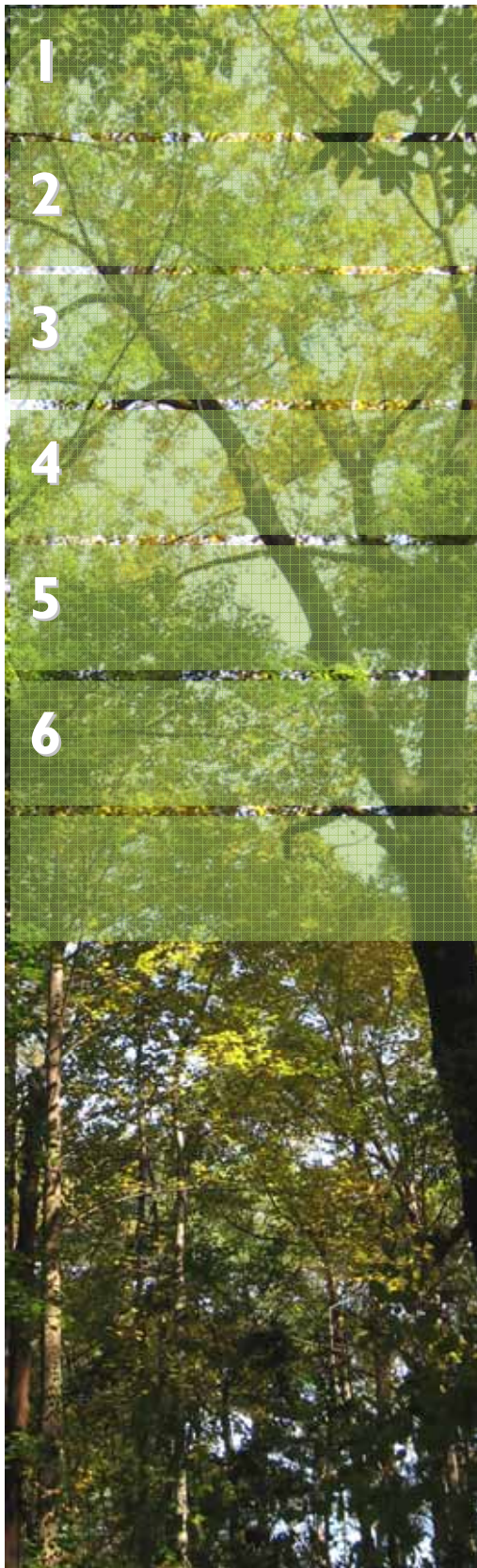
prepared for:
DeKalb County
Parks and Recreation Department
DeKalb County, Georgia



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August, 2009, DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Department selected MACTEC to prepare a Master Plan for Fork Creek Mountain Park. The planning process included an inventory of existing conditions, site analysis, development and evaluation of alternative concepts and the selection of a final park master plan. Three public input meetings were conducted during the course of the planning process. Minutes from the Public Input Meetings are included in the Appendix.



Caskey Farm barn

Fork Creek Mountain Park is a ±55 acre Community Park located near the intersection of River Road and Panthersville Road in the Ellenwood community of DeKalb County. The park is surrounded by residential neighborhoods. From the outset, the following issues were identified to be included in the planning process:

- The ±20 addition to Fork Creek Mountain Park was purchased through Greenspace Bond funding. The park development budget is funded through 2001 Park Bond allocations.
- The Park lies within the Soapstone Ridge Historic District as defined by the National Register of Historic Places. Several important archaeological excavation sites are located within the park boundary.
- The upper quarter of Fork Creek Mountain Park presents a picturesque agricultural quality with farm buildings, meadows and ponds that are an opportunity to establish a context for education and recreation opportunity.
- Steep slopes account for over 20% of the total park acreage. (Refer to Chapter 2, Site Inventory and Chapter 3, Site Analysis).

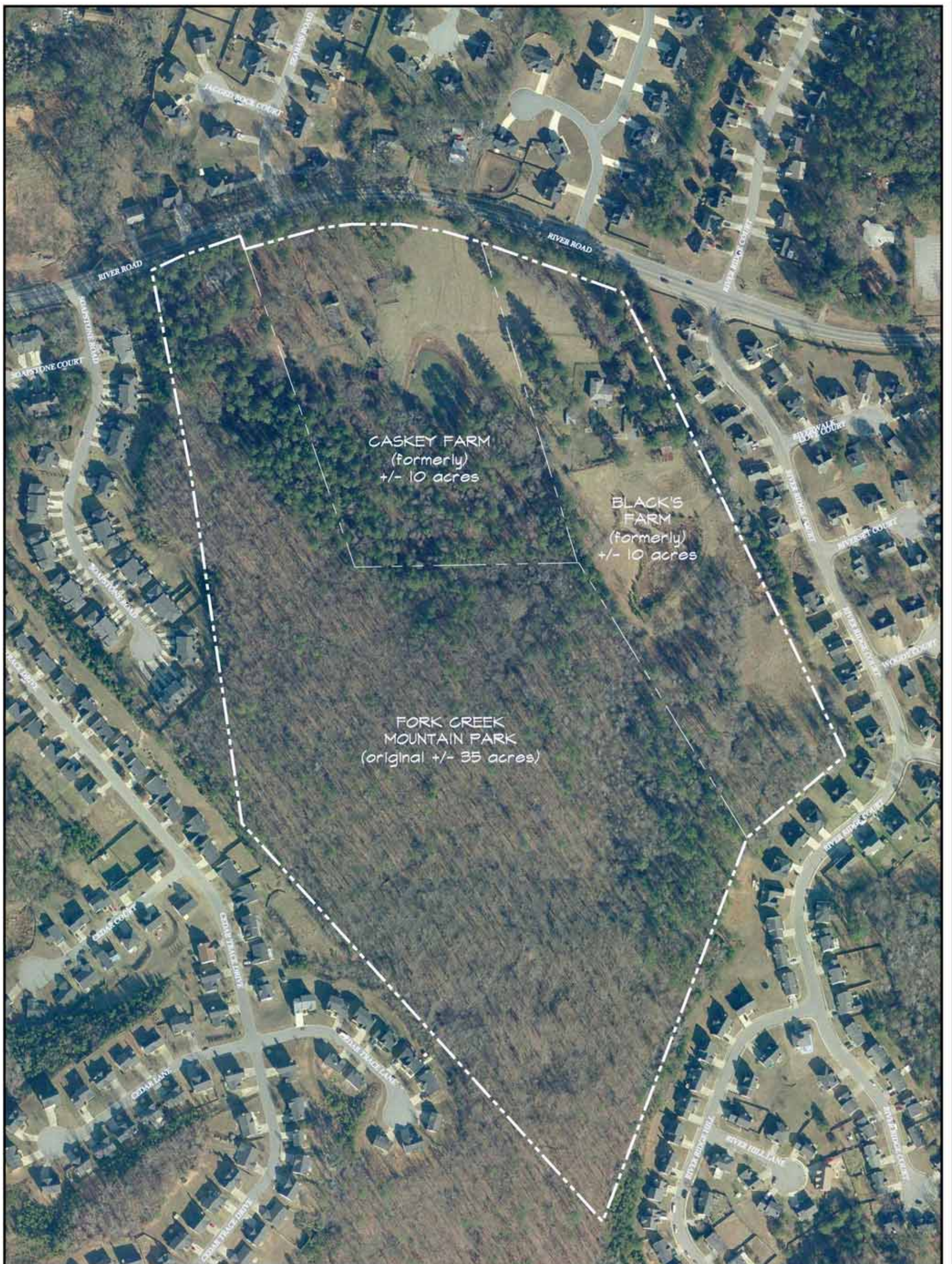
The Master Plan for Fork Creek Mountain Park provides connectivity throughout the park, mitigates impacts to the site due to stormwater, and increases the level of recreation opportunity. Based on input received from the County Staff and citizen input via Public Input Meetings, the following amenities were considered priorities for consideration in the implementation of the Fork Creek Mountain Park Master Plan:

- A network of trails and parking areas to enhance security, connectivity and visibility for the public
- Playground Area
- Agricultural Interpretive Facility
- Fishing Pond
- Community Garden
- Education Activity Center building
- Outdoor Classrooms
- Interpretation of the park's archaeological context



Fork Creek Mtn. Park meadow

FOLLOWING PAGE: FIGURE I – AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH EXHIBIT



CASKEY FARM
(formerly)
+/- 10 acres

BLACK'S
FARM
(formerly)
+/- 10 acres

FORK CREEK
MOUNTAIN PARK
(original +/- 35 acres)

DeKalb County
Parks & Recreation
**Fork Creek
Mountain Park**

**AERIAL
PHOTO**

January 7, 2010



MACTEC

NORTH



0' 50' 100' 200' 400'

SCALE IN FEET

SITE INVENTORY

SYSTEM-WIDE CONTEXT

GREENSPACE ACQUISITION

Fork Creek Mountain Park is a \pm 55 acre Community Park located at 2835 River Road, approximately 1,000 feet to the west of the intersection of River Road and Panthersville Road in the Ellenwood community of DeKalb County. Fork Creek Mountain Park is within County Commission District 5 (Lee May) and Super District 6 (Cathy Gannon). The original park area was approximately 35 acres; it was expanded to its present size with Greenspace Acquisition Bond funding by purchasing the \pm 10 acre Caskey Farm and the \pm 10 acres Black Farm. The original \pm 35 acre parcel was purchased with Land and Water Conservation Funds.



Caskey Farm barn

COUNTY-WIDE RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Fork Creek Mountain Park is classified in the 2009 DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Master Plan (RMP), as a Community Park. Community Parks are described in the RMP as having a size range from 10 to 100 acres and serving both passive and active needs. Although the acreage of Fork Creek Mountain Park is within typical Community Park acreage thresholds, existing park constraints limit the potential for active recreation. The RMP recommends retaining the classification. Recommendations made in the RMP include increasing maintenance of existing facilities, encouraging pedestrian connectivity to the surrounding neighborhoods and promoting native species ecology by removing invasive vegetation.

SURROUNDING LAND USES

NEIGHBORHOODS

Fork Creek Mountain Park is surrounded by residential subdivisions with entrances along River Road. According to Census 2000 information provided in the 2009 DeKalb County Recreation Master Plan, population density for the area within 3 miles of Fork Creek Mountain Park is in the range of 1,000 to 2,000 people per square mile. Projected population density for this area is estimated to remain within this range with a projected change in population of 5% or less through the year 2020. This relatively low growth rate can be attributed to the intensity of residential development prior to 2000.

SCHOOLS

Fork Creek Mountain Park is situated in close proximity to a large number of schools. School facilities within 2 miles of the park include Oak View Elementary, Cedar Grove Elementary, Bob Mathis Elementary, Cedar Grove Middle, Columbia Middle, Cedar Grove High, DeKalb High (Technology) and Ellenwood Academy High. Schools within 3 miles of the park include: Meadow View Elementary, Narvie Harris Elementary, Chapel Hill Elementary, Clifton Elementary, Meadowview Elementary, Martin Luther King Jr. High, Flat Shoals Elementary, and Chapel Hill Middle. Georgia Perimeter



Cedar Grove HS – Public Meeting #3

College is located approximately 1.5 miles from Fork Creek Mountain Park. Wesley Chapel Branch Library is approximately 3.5 miles from the park.

Churches within 3 miles of the park include: Atlanta Family, Beulah Baptist, Calvary Hill Missionary, Cedar Grove United Methodist, County Line United Methodist, God's True Worshipers, Jehovah's Witness, Lovelife Christian Fellowship, New Hope Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal Deliverance Assembly, Poplar Spring Baptist, Refreshing Church of God in Christ and Riverside Baptist.

PARKS

County Parks within 3 miles of Fork Creek Mountain Park include the following. Park classifications for these parks are provided in parenthesis:

- Bouldercrest (community)
- Chapel Hill (neighborhood)
- Constitution Lakes (natural area)
- County Line (neighborhood)
- Ellenwood/River Road (future community park)
- Exchange Park (regional)
- Flat Shoals Hudson (future linear park / greenway)
- Flat Shoals (neighborhood)
- Gresham (regional)
- Intrenchment Creek (future regional)
- Rainbow Drive (special facility)
- Sugar Creek (special facility)
- Summergate (neighborhood)
- Truelove (neighborhood)
- Wesley Chapel-Kelly Chapel (mini)



Source: DeKalb Co. Recreation Master Plan

Brown's Mill Park is within 5 miles of Fork Creek Mountain Park; this Community Park provides active recreation opportunities with aquatic, baseball and multi-use fields.

HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Health care facilities within 3 miles of the park include: Georgia Regional Hospital at Atlanta (1.5 miles) and Grady Health Center South DeKalb (2.5 miles).

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

EXISTING FACILITIES

Fork Creek Mountain Park originally consisted of approximately 35 acres of steep-sloped woodlands with a small-scale 'picnic park' located at the park entry along River Road. The original park area was expanded to its present size of approximately 55 acres with Greenspace Acquisition Bond funding by purchasing the ± 10 acre Caskey Farm and the ± 10 acre Black Farm. The original ± 35 acre parcel was purchased with Land and Water Conservation Funds. Existing facilities at Fork Creek Mountain Park are minimal. These include a small parking area, picnic tables and a volley ball area. A network of natural-surface trails, extending approximately 1.0 miles in length, circulates throughout the original park acreage.



Caskey Farm buildings

CASKEY FARM

Acquired in 2000, the former Caskey Farm property retains a main house, barn, garage/apartment and chicken coop structure in good-to-fair condition. A small pond, pecan orchard, well-house, rail fences and ornamental fences also remain. The original portion of the main house appears to date to the 1930's with additions to the house being constructed at later dates.

BLACK FARM

Acquired in conjunction with the Caskey Farm in 2000, the former Black Farm property retains a main house, barn and shed in good-to-fair condition. A small pond and meadow area also remain. Appearing to date from the 1970's to 1980's, the main house is in good condition. The Caskey Farm property, including its pond, main house, and outbuildings, can be viewed from the Black Farm main house site. The Black Farm main house is situated such that views of the pond, woodlands and meadow are presented to excellent advantage.

ACCESS

Fork Creek Mountain Park has approximately 1,150 linear feet of frontage along the southern right-of-way of River Road. Three driveways occur:

1. to the original park, $\pm 200'$ from the northwestern corner of the park
2. to the Caskey Farm, $\pm 350'$ from the northwestern corner of the park
3. to the Black Farm, at the northeastern corner of the park or $\pm 1,150'$ from the northwestern corner



Existing parking area

NATURAL FEATURES

HYDROLOGY

Two perennial streams flow to the southeast from the park. The northmost of these originates above the watershed of the Black Farm pond and continues beyond the pond's outlet. Although this pond does not currently contain water, it is reasonable to assume that repair or replacement of the existing outlet control structure could resolve the situation. The other perennial stream occurs in the southeast portion of the site and flows approximately 200' before departing the park boundary. The combined watershed drainage area for the two streams is approximately 75 acres. Overall, the park lies within the Conley Creek watershed. Within the boundaries of the park, the condition of these streams is characteristic of shaded, naturally-vegetated woodland watercourses. Evidence of moderate levels of stormwater runoff can be seen by erosive scouring that occurs at several points along the northmost stream. According to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map #13089C0142H, effective date May 7, 2001 for DeKalb County, Georgia and Unincorporated Areas, no 100 year floodplain exists on site. This is consistent with the hydrologic character of the park because of the relatively small size of the watershed and the limited amount of impervious surface within the watershed.



pond

VEGETATION

The majority of Fork Creek Mountain Park is undeveloped greenspace. The former farmsteads and existing picnic park areas combine for a total of approximately 11 acres. This previously maintained portion of the park is approximately 20% of the ± 55 total park acres. Vegetation in these areas includes mature tree specimens (oak, pine, pecan, walnut), scattered plantings of ornamental species and a meadow area that experiences periodic mowing. Vegetation within the remaining 80% (± 44 acres) of the park is mixed hardwoods and evergreen vegetation such as Oak, Hickory, Pine, Maple, Tulip Poplar, Magnolia, Beech, Dogwood, Sourwood, Black Cherry and Sweetgum. At the boundaries between the original park property and the Caskey and Black Farms, invasive species including Chinese Privet and English Ivy exist. These boundaries are most evident where maintenance and clearing of understory species has occurred in close proximity to the steep-sloped areas of naturally occurring hardwood forest within the original park property. Although 'edge' ecology can be an important habitat, in the case of Fork Creek Mountain Park, the edges have become overrun with invasive plant species and 'pest' insects such as ticks, chiggers and fleas.



Large walnut tree

Chapter 4 - Area Exhibit, provides descriptions of the natural character of each of the major areas within Fork Creek Mountain Park.

TOPOGRAPHY

In terms of topographic relief, Fork Creek Mountain Park contains a high proportion of steep slopes, particularly in the southern half of the park. For the purposes of the Master Planning process, steep slopes are defined as being greater than 20%. Steep slopes account for approximately 20%, or 11 acres of the total park acreage. Steep slopes in upland areas occur along the edges of ridges rather than at the tops of ridges where slopes decline to less steep percentages. Where mature tree canopies provide protection, very little erosion has occurred in these areas. The majority of the flat slopes within the park are located in the areas formerly maintained as farms. The park's highest elevation is 895' above mean sea level. The lowest elevation is 770'.



Steep slopes

FOLLOWING PAGE: FIGURE 2 – EXISTING CONDITIONS EXHIBIT

SITE ANALYSIS

SYSTEM-WIDE CONTEXT

GREENSPACE ACQUISITION

Properties purchased with Greenspace Bond funding must not exceed land use coverage thresholds regarding utilities, public facilities, trails, access facilities and total developed area. Although these restrictions generally amount to 5% of the total greenspace property area for each category, the overall effect of the restrictions is not inconsistent with typical recreation development.

COUNTY-WIDE RECREATION MASTER PLAN

The recommendation statement made in the DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Master Plan (RMP), July 2009, is ‘increasing maintenance of facilities and signage, while encouraging pedestrian connection and promoting native species ecology by removing scrub/invasive growth.’ These recommendations, as well as the recommendation to retain a Community Park classification, are within the character and context of Fork Creek Mountain Park and should be adopted as the basis for the park planning process. However, due to the constraints related to steep slopes and the constraints associated with Greenspace Property, active recreation uses, such as athletic fields and courts, would not be appropriate at this location.

SURROUNDING LAND USES

NEIGHBORHOODS

The neighborhoods within close proximity to Fork Creek Mountain Park could benefit greatly from increased recreation opportunity. In the same context, the park could benefit from an increase in participation that increased opportunity could provide. The River Road Community Coalition represents neighborhoods adjacent to Fork Creek Mountain Park. This organization has officially adopted the park, led several park clean-up efforts and provided community outreach during the Master Planning process.



Adjacent neighborhoods

SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES

The park's close proximity to numerous schools and churches establishes the opportunity to provide programs and facilities with a youth-oriented educational context. After-school programs could be particularly well-suited to Fork Creek Mountain Park.

PARKS

Because so many DeKalb County parks exist within 3 miles of Fork Creek Mountain Park, consideration must be taken during the Master Planning process to ensure that redundant recreation opportunities are not proposed. Aquatic facilities and recreation center buildings are available at Gresham Park and Brown's Mill Park. Football fields are currently provided at Gresham, Exchange and Brown's Mill Park. Gresham, Exchange, Truelove and Brown's Mill Parks provide baseball fields. This considerable quantity

recreation facilities allows the opportunity to utilize Fork Creek Mountain Park's natural resources toward passive recreation experiences and 'special facility' uses.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES

Existing recreation facilities at Fork Creek Mountain Park are in need of repair and renovation. The small parking area surface is in poor condition and the volley ball court area is in disrepair. A network of natural-surface trails, extending approximately 1.0 miles, circulates throughout the original park acreage. Certain portions of the trail are overgrown and need to be cleared. However, the existing nature trails are a valuable opportunity for site access and passive recreation.



CASKEY FARM

Although the Caskey Farm main house bears no historical significance and is not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the overall character of the Caskey Farm is one of typical small-sized farmsteads in DeKalb County during the mid to late 20th century. While neither the barn nor the garage-apartment would provide a significant return on the investment required to thoroughly renovate these structures, their visual character warrants consideration of further preservation/interpretation efforts. When considering the site as a whole, the spaces created by the buildings, driveways, trees and pond provide a 'ready-made' opportunity for interpretation of historic agricultural lifestyles in DeKalb County.

BLACK FARM

Acquired in conjunction with the Caskey Farm in 2000, the former Black Farm property retains a main house, barn and shed in good-to-fair condition. A small pond, meadow area, and rail fences also remain. Although the main house is in good condition, the age and layout of the building preclude its potential reuse as a recreation facility. The Black Farm property, with its elevated home site, meadow area, tall pines and pond has excellent potential for expansion of passive recreation uses and would provide a suitable setting for park facilities such as learning centers and interpretive exhibits.

ACCESS

Access to Fork Creek Mountain Park is limited to the southern right-of-way of River Road. The location of the park entrance driveway on River Road is poorly situated in relation to the subdivision intersection immediately to the east; future driveways should align with existing subdivision intersections to avoid traffic conflicts and minimize site distance issues. The meadow area immediately adjacent to River Road provides an opportunity to create an open views from River Road of the 'front end' of the park for security and visibility.



NATURAL FEATURES

HYDROLOGY

Two perennial streams flow to the southeast from the park. The northmost of these originates above the watershed of the Black Farm pond and continues beyond the pond's outlet. Although this pond does not currently contain water, it can be assumed that repair or replacement of the existing outlet control structure may allow the pond to hold water. Both this pond and the Caskey Farm pond represent opportunities for passive recreation such as fishing, picnicking and walking trails.

VEGETATION

The abundance of large, specimen trees at the park is an excellent resource that any park would benefit from. In the area of the Caskey Farm, the large pecan trees and walnut trees not only provide a high shade canopy, they create a botanically significant setting for any future uses. Large trees also exist along the eastern boundary of the park. These trees create a visual boundary between the park and the adjacent subdivision that could be utilized to found a vegetative buffer and screen. The vegetative edges that exist within the park constrain access and views.

TOPOGRAPHY

In terms of topographic relief, the steep slopes within Fork Creek Mountain Park can constrain access to the parks' higher elevations. However, these same steep slopes have provided protection for undisturbed growth of large canopy trees that are a major asset for the park. Areas within the park with less steep slopes provide opportunities for passive recreation and park facilitation.



Fishing pond



Hardwood forest

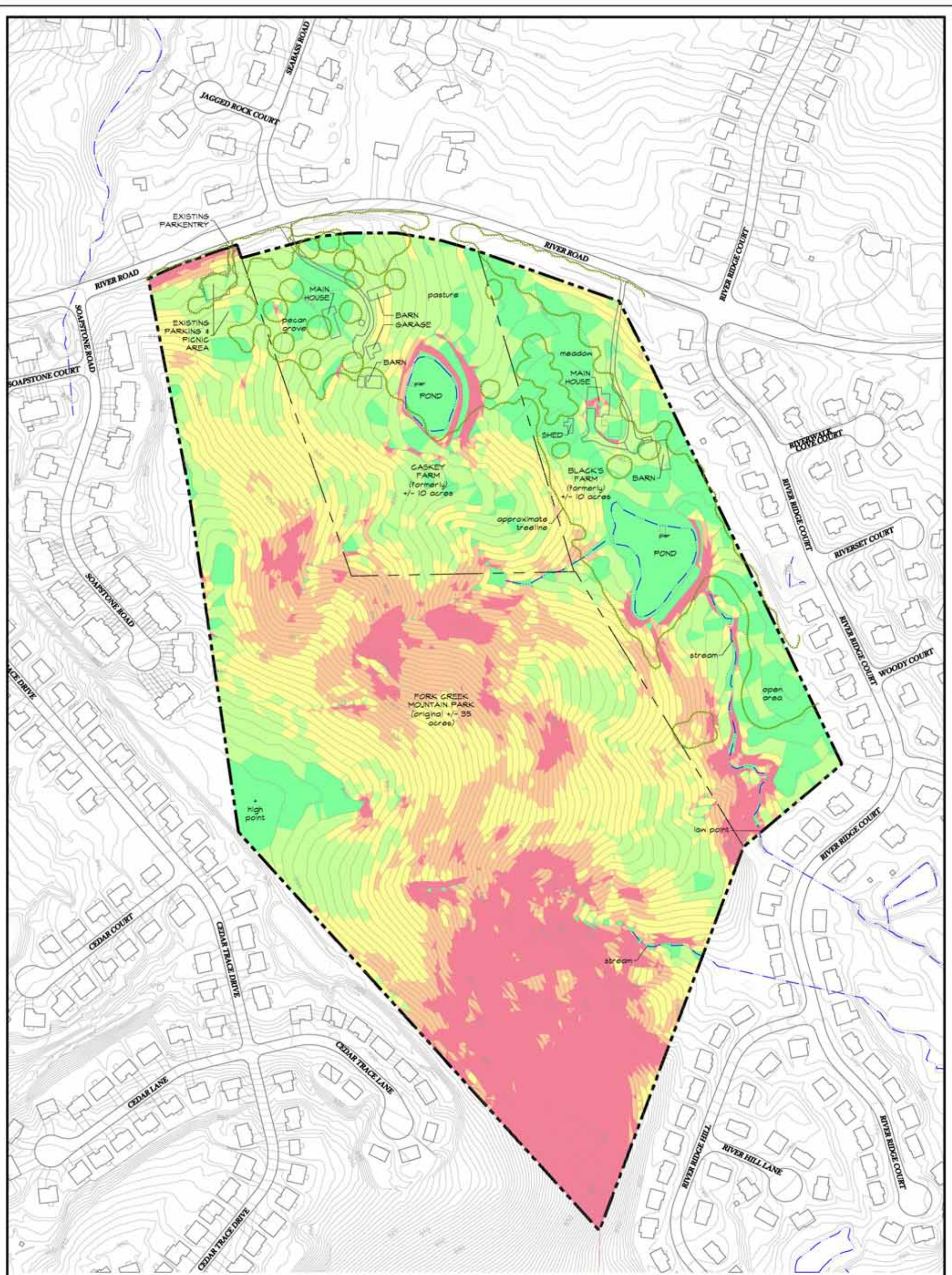


Rock outcropping



meadow

FOLLOWING PAGE: FIGURE 3 – SITE ANALYSIS



**DeKalb County
Parks & Recreation
Fork Creek
Mountain Park**

**SLOPE
ANALYSIS**

January 7, 2010

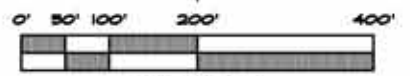
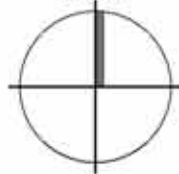


MACTEC

LEGEND

Color	Slope Range
Light Green	0%-5%
Yellow-Green	5%-10%
Yellow	10%-15%
Orange	15%-20%
Red	+20%

NORTH



SCALE IN FEET

AREA EXHIBIT

Based on input from the 1st Public Input Meeting (see Appendix for meeting minutes) and information gathered through the Site Inventory and Site Analysis, several distinct areas became apparent during the early Master Planning Process for Fork Creek Mountain Park. Identifying the character, appropriate uses and design considerations for each of these defined Areas provides guidance for future decision-making. Each Area is described below in terms of physical character, recreation opportunities, and connectivity with other areas of the park. Figure 4 – Area Exhibit provides a graphic delineation of the major Areas within Fork Creek Mountain Park.

The following list is a summary for each of the Areas defined within the park.

DAY USE RECREATION AREA

This area contains the existing Fork Creek Mountain Park facilities, including the open volley ball area and the asphalt parking area. It is defined by River Road to the north, the park boundary and adjacent neighborhood to the west and the Caskey Farm property to the south and east. This Area of the park is connected to the remaining park acreage via an existing network of natural trails. Slopes are relatively flat and vegetation is dominated by mature pine trees.



playground

Design Considerations:

- Vehicular access/ Parking areas
- Playground area
- Picnic shelters
- Restroom
- Park 'furniture': waste receptacles, benches, picnic tables, water fountains, etc.
- Walking trails
- Park information and way-finding signage
- Pedestrian scale security lighting
- Improved site lines for visibility and security
- Connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods and linkage to other park areas
- Preserve/protect existing mature pine trees
- Remove invasive species / replant with native vegetation

AGRICULTURAL INTERPRETATION AREA

This area is defined by the meadow to the east, River Road to the north, the existing Day Use Area to the west and the steep slopes of the original park acreage to the south. Having originally existed as a family farm, this Area contains a main house, barn, garage-apartment, chicken coop, a small pond, pecan orchard, well-house, rail fences and an ornamental fence. Dominant plant species in this area include Oak, Pecan, Walnut and Pine. The existing driveway provides access to this area of the park. The area slopes predominantly to the east with a



Missouri Botanic Garden

slope range of less than 10%.

Design Considerations:

- Vehicular access/ bus parking areas
- Interpretation of historical and cultural resources
- Interpret (or renovate) the existing buildings to retain the spatial character of the area, explore their use as interpretive pavilions
- Interpret existing buildings to communicate a typical agricultural way of life for a family in DeKalb County during the mid 20th century
- Walking trails / nature trails constructed with soft-surface materials
- Connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods and linkage to other park areas
- Park information and way-finding signage
- Utilize open areas for passive recreation opportunities
- Remove invasive species / replant with native vegetation

EDUCATION ACTIVITY AREA

This area is located in the northeast section of the park and includes the area that was formerly the Black Family Farm. This area consists of relatively flat slopes facing south and east. The majority of this area is open meadow with clusters of large pines and specimen oaks that define the former property boundaries.

Design Considerations:

- Vehicular access and parking areas with loading/unloading, drop-off and bus parking spaces
- Education Activity Center building for
 - o Classrooms
 - o Meeting rooms
 - o Visitor Center
 - o Display archaeological artifacts found at Fork Creek Mtn. Park
 - o Outdoor classroom (plaza space adjacent to building)
- Black Farm pond
 - o Outdoor Laboratory
 - o After-school programs
 - o Walking path
- Walking trails / nature trails / fitness trails constructed with soft-surface materials
- Shade Pavilions
- Seating opportunities / wildlife observation spaces
- Outdoor classroom
- Park information, way-finding signage
- Remove invasive species / replant with native vegetation
- Vegetative buffer: Supplement eastern boundary with native species



Hilltop Arboretum Visitor Center,
Baton Rouge, LA

MEADOW AREA

This area is defined by the existing meadow at the north section of the park, formerly a portion of the Caskey Farm. The area is bounded to the south by the Caskey Farm pond, to the north by River Road, to the west by the Caskey Farm buildings and to the east by a tree line along the Caskey/Black boundary. This area serves as a transition zone between the Agricultural Interpretive Area and the Education Activity Area and is proposed to include passive recreation opportunities.

Design Considerations:

- Vehicular access and shared parking area for adjacent Areas
- Community Garden/Orchard
- OPTION: sports court such as basketball or tennis
- Walking trails / nature trails / fitness trails constructed with pervious surface materials
- Connectivity to other park areas
- Park information, way-finding signage, interpretation of natural and cultural features
- Seating opportunities / wildlife observation spaces
- Fishing Pond



Community Garden

NATURAL/CULTURAL RESOURCE AREA

Containing the majority of acreage within the park, this area is characterized by steep, eastward facing slopes and mixed hardwood and evergreen tree species such as Beech, Oak, Maple, Sweetgum, Pine, Cedar and Hickory. Understory species include Magnolia, Dogwood, Redbud and Big-leaf Magnolia. Invasive species include Chinese Privet, Honeysuckle, Kudzu, Japanese Stiltgrass and Wisteria. This area contains evidence of 'workshop' and 'quarry' sites as described in the Soapstone Ridge Historic District Nomination and should be protected.

Design Considerations:

- Remove invasive species / replant with native vegetation
- Utilize existing trail corridors for Walking trails / nature trails constructed with soft-surface materials
- connectivity to adjacent to other park areas
- Seating opportunities / wildlife observation spaces
- Park information, way-finding signage
- interpretation of natural and cultural resources

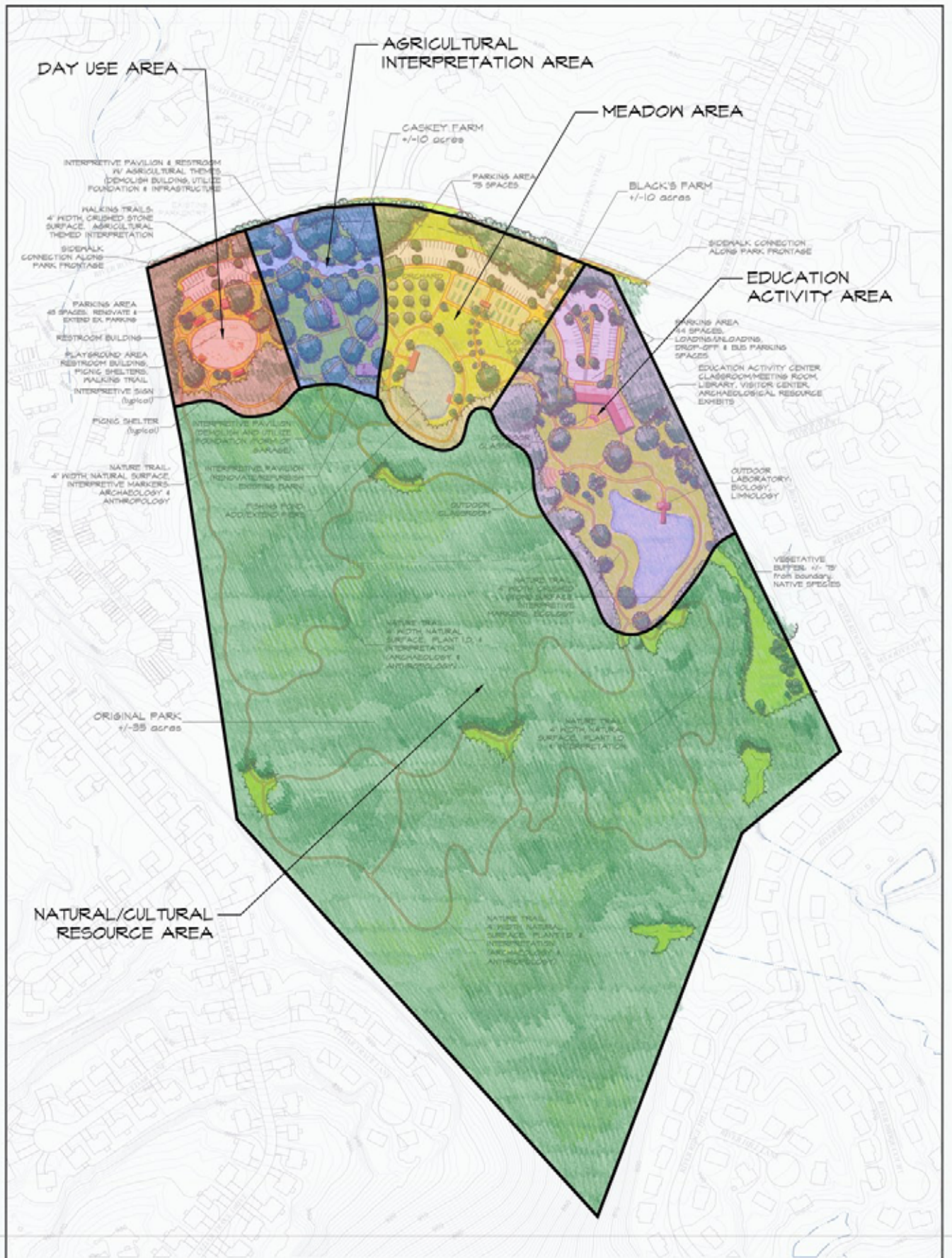


Fork Creek Mtn. Park – fishing pond



Fork Creek Mtn. Park – open area

FOLLOWING PAGE: FIGURE 4 – AREA EXHIBIT

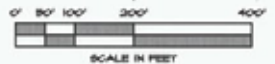


DeKalb County
Parks & Recreation
Fork Creek
Mountain Park

AREA
EXHIBIT
May 1, 2010



MACTEC



DRAFT MASTER PLAN

DRAFT MASTER PLAN

The Draft Master Plan for Fork Creek Mountain Park was presented at the 3rd Public Input Meeting (see Appendix for meeting minutes). The main goals for the Draft Master Plan were to:

- Enhance security, connectivity, accessibility and visibility for the public
- improve trail connectivity throughout the park
- protect the park's natural and archaeological resources
- increase the level of recreation opportunity

Based on input received from DeKalb County staff, citizen comments, and Public Input Meetings, the following major elements were proposed in the Draft Master Plan (see Figure 5, page 22) for Fork Creek Mountain Park:

- **PLAYGROUND AREA:** located in the open area formerly used for volleyball. Include restroom, shade shelters and walking trails. Parking: ± 40 spaces.
- **4' WIDE NATURE TRAILS:** natural-surface materials to improve and supplement existing trail corridors. Provide trailheads with interpretive markers and park way-finding signage. Include seating opportunities for wildlife observation.
- **6' WIDE CRUSHED STONE TRAILS:** for moderate pedestrian traffic. May be widened to 8' to accommodate maintenance and security access.
- **8' WIDE CONCRETE PATHWAYS:** for areas with heavy pedestrian traffic, such as sidewalks and walkways adjacent to playgrounds and parking areas.
- **PARKING AREAS:** provide vehicular connection between existing driveways along River Road, provide ±160 pervious surface spaces. Include removable bollards to restrict vehicular access to trails. Mitigate stormwater run-off.
- **COMMUNITY GARDEN:** construct ±5,000 sf garden area adjacent to parking in the Meadow Area. Enclose with fencing, provide storage shed, water service.
- **AGRICULTURAL INTERPRETATION AREA:** interpret existing building forms and utilize existing building and landscape spaces for interpretation of agricultural lifestyles in mid-20th century. Develop pedestrian-oriented spaces with programs such as demonstrations, 'living history', etc.
- **FISHING POND:** renovate the existing Caskey Farm pond to provide fishing and picnicking. Potential as a stormwater management facility should be considered during design phase.
- **EDUCATION ACTIVITY CENTER:** utilize Black Farm home site to implement a ±4,000 sf Education Center Building with classrooms, meeting rooms, library, and archaeological artifacts display. Parking: ± 45 spaces.
- **OUTDOOR CLASSROOM:** include an outdoor plaza space that would be integrated with the Education Center building. This space could be utilized for education, presentations, performances and meetings and should accommodate approximately 100 people.
- **OUTDOOR CLASSROOM:** A secondary outdoor classroom is proposed to be detached from the Education Center building. This space would be informally constructed and provide seating for approximately 50 people.
- **OUTDOOR LABORATORY (Black Farm pond):** utilize location of existing pier to construct a covered shelter for storage of laboratory equipment used for after-school programs related to biology, limnology, etc. May also be used as a covered space for limited-size presentations.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS AND AMENITIES BY AREA

The following list includes the major amenities proposed for each of the Areas described in Chapter 4 – Area Exhibit:

DAY USE RECREATION AREA

- **Recommendations**

- Provide a sidewalk connection along the River Road frontage. Coordinate with DeKalb County Transportation Department regarding future plans for River Road.
- Playground area in the location of the existing open volleyball area.
- Utilize Caskey Farm driveway location for new formal park entry.
- Provide approximately 40 parking spaces. Utilize existing parking area and extend toward Caskey Farm driveway (eastward).
- Vegetation in the developed park areas, including maintained sod areas and areas that experience periodic clearing, should be supplemented with additional plantings to provide shade, attract wildlife and improve the natural quality of the park.
- Where invasive species are removed, supplement those areas with native plant species.
- Mitigate stormwater run-off with subsurface drainage, bio-swales and energy dissipation.

- **Amenities**

- Parking Area
 - ± 40 spaces (optional pervious surface)
 - Pedestrian scale security lighting
 - Bollards to prevent public vehicular access beyond parking area
- Playground Area
 - ±12,000 sf total area
 - Separate age groups (<5 yrs, 5-12 yrs.)
 - Bonded rubber surface
 - Concrete walkway defines limits of area
 - provide pedestrian connection from parking spaces to proposed trails
- Picnic Shelters
 - water service
 - electric service
 - barbeque grills
 - waste receptacles
- Restroom Building
 - Exterior water service
 - Timer-controlled access
 - Barrier-free access
- 8' wide concrete walkway
 - access from parking area to playground
- Trailhead
 - To Natural/Cultural Resource Area
 - Interpretive signage
 - Park information and way-finding signage

AGRICULTURAL INTERPRETATION AREA

- **Recommendations**

- Utilize existing character of Caskey Farm to interpret mid-20th century agricultural lifestyles

- Conduct further evaluations regarding historic significance and long-term maintenance concerns related to renovation of existing buildings.
- Replace existing main house and garage/apartment with interpretive structures that represent the buildings' architectural character but provide low maintenance alternatives and covered settings for signage, displays, markers, etc.
- Renovate existing red barn as the singular icon for Fork Creek Mountain Park. Utilize barn space for interpretive exhibits, presentations and programs.
- Protect existing pecan grove and walnut trees.
- Where invasive species are removed, supplement those areas with native plant species.
- Mitigate stormwater run-off with subsurface drainage, bio-swales and energy dissipation.
- **Amenities**
 - Interpretive Pavilion (garage apartment location)
 - Visitor Center/Interpretive Pavilion (main house location)
 - Restroom facility
 - Utilize existing infrastructure of Caskey Farm main house
 - Agricultural Interpretive Pavilion (Renovate existing barn)
 - 8' wide concrete walkway
 - access from parking area
 - shared parking with Day Use Area and Meadow Area
 - bus parking in close proximity to main house structure
 - 6' wide crushed stone path
 - align pathways to reflect farm building layout
 - connection to Day Use Area, Meadow Area and Natural/Cultural Area
 - Maintenance and security access

MEADOW TRANSITION AREA

- **Recommendations**
 - Where invasive species are removed, supplement those areas with native plant species.
 - Clear underbrush along River Road right-of-way to increase park visibility
 - Mitigate stormwater run-off with energy dissipation, sub-surface infiltration, bio-swales
- **Amenities**
 - Parking Area
 - ± 160 spaces (optional pervious surface)
 - Pedestrian scale security lighting
 - Bollards to prevent public vehicular access
 - shared parking with Day Use Area and Meadow Area
 - planted tree-islands for additional shade
 - 8' wide concrete walkway
 - access from parking area to adjacent facilities
 - Community Garden
 - ±5,000 sf area
 - Enclose with fencing
 - Storage shed
 - Water service
 - Open Play Area
 - Refine the existing meadow area by smoothing grades, planting turf grass and shade trees to the south of the Community Garden
 - Picnic Shelters
 - water service
 - electric service
 - barbeque grills

- waste receptacles
- 6' wide crushed stone path
 - connection to Day Use Area, Education Area and Natural/Cultural Area
 - Maintenance and security access

EDUCATION ACTIVITY AREA

• Recommendations

- Utilize existing Black Farm home site for new building construction to reduce development impact and provide utility infrastructure
- Explore existing pond's potential as a stormwater management facility during design phase.
- Provide nature trails constructed with soft-surface materials to reduce impacts to sensitive areas.
- Retain existing woodland edges and open areas. Supplement existing stands of trees along the eastern boundary with native species to create a vegetative buffer between the park and adjacent residential areas.
- Where invasive species are removed, supplement those areas with native plant species.
- Mitigate stormwater run-off with subsurface drainage, bio-swales and energy dissipation.

• Amenities

- Education Activity Center
 - ±4,000 sf
 - Flexible spaces:
 - Classrooms
 - Meeting rooms
 - Library spaces
 - Display spaces for archaeological artifacts
- Parking Area
 - ± 45 spaces (optional pervious surface)
 - Loading/unloading lane
 - Bus parking spaces
 - Bollards to prevent public vehicular access
 - shared parking with Meadow Area
 - Pedestrian scale security lighting
- 8' wide concrete walkway
 - access from parking area to adjacent facilities
- 6' wide crushed stone path
 - connection to Day Use Area, Meadow Area and Natural/Cultural Area
 - Maintenance and security access
- Outdoor Classroom
 - Outdoor plaza integrated with Education Center
 - ±75 capacity
 - Capability for performances, presentations
- Outdoor classroom
 - Traditional, informal construction
 - ±50 capacity
- Park information and way-finding signage
- Pedestrian scale security lighting

NATURAL/CULTURAL RESOURCE AREA

• Recommendations

- Provide nature trails constructed with soft-surface materials to reduce impacts to sensitive areas.
- Provide seating opportunities/wildlife observation stations.
- Continue and accelerate efforts to clean park areas and remove invasive species.
- Where invasive species are removed, supplement those areas with native plant species.
- Minimize impacts to streams and buffers.
-

• Amenities

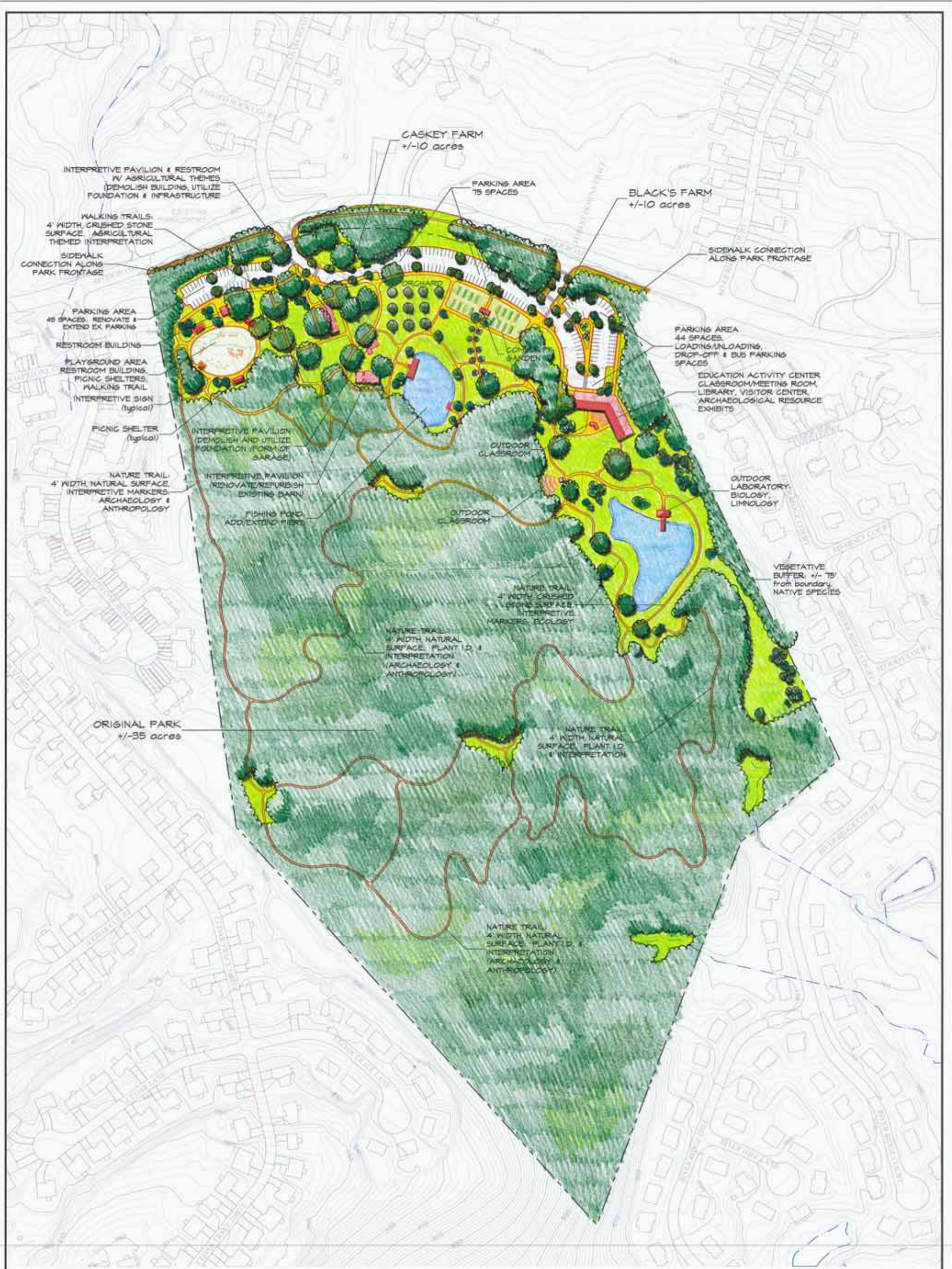
- 4' wide natural surface trails
 - Utilize existing trail corridors
 - connections to all other park areas
- Interpretive signage
- Park information and way-finding signage

OPINION of PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COST (Appendix A)

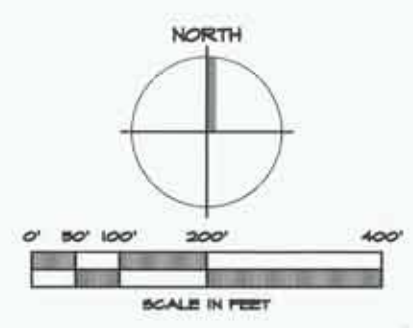
MACTEC has prepared a budget-level opinion of probable construction cost to implement the recommended improvements for Fork Creek Mountain Park. The opinion of probable cost is based on identification of the quantities of recreation facilities included in the Draft Master Plan. It should be recognized that these quantities are considered a Master-Plan-level approximation only and additional detailed surveying and engineering design will be required to establish more specific and accurate construction cost information.

MACTEC is involved in recent and ongoing parks and recreation construction projects in Georgia. Our involvement as landscape architects, engineers, designers and construction administrators provides comparable information on unit costs for recreation facilities under construction at the present time. The unit cost estimates found in Appendix A reflect our current understanding of the cost of construction for specific recreation facilities, with all amounts reflecting 2010 dollars, not accounting for inflation in future years.

FOLLOWING PAGE: FIGURE 5 – DRAFT MASTER PLAN



DeKalb County
Parks & Recreation
**Fork Creek
Mountain Park**
**DRAFT
MASTER PLAN**
May 1, 2010



IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATION

Recommendations for implementation of the Fork Creek Mountain Park Master Plan can be categorized under four headings:

1. Recommended Phasing Agenda
2. Regulatory Requirements (inventory and review)
3. Park Design and Engineering
4. Implementation

PHASING AGENDA

Due to the size and complexity of Fork Creek Mountain Park, as well as funding availability, it is not likely that all of the facilities and amenities proposed within Draft Master Plan can be implemented in the near future. Establishing a set of priorities can ensure that the proposed facilities and amenities most critical to accomplishing DeKalb County's goals for recreation service can be achieved. Additionally, public input gained during the planning process can inform a priority agenda for the park. With the insight gained by a well-considered phasing strategy for the park as a whole, future implementation of park facilities can proceed in a logical sequence.

When developing a phasing agenda, it is important to consider the relative impacts and design implications related to specific proposed facilities. For example, construction of a large playground area or reconstruction of paved surfaces will need to be coordinated through DeKalb County Stormwater Management regulations. Additionally, new construction beyond established thresholds can release Fork Creek Mountain Park from its current 'grandfathered' status and require that the park be brought to current stormwater standards for detention and water quality. Finally, the phasing agenda should be structured to allow park operations to continue service for as long as possible and, when services need to be discontinued, that they be out of operation for as little time as possible.

Future phases of implementation will also depend upon funding availability and community recreation needs. The educational nature of the proposed Master Plan could allow the park to be a successful candidate for education-oriented grants. The availability of grants and other funding sources may allow the granted project to supersede other priorities.

Based on information received during Public Input Meetings, from public comments provided during and after the meetings, and from meetings with County staff, the following phases and components are recommended:

PHASE I – Due to limited initial funding, Phase I should focus on upgrades and improvements to the existing park facilities and ‘setting the stage’ for future implementation of the master plan as funding becomes available. However, as part of Phase I, a portion of the available funds should be allocated for a playground area in accordance with the Draft Master Plan.

An estimate of probable construction cost for the Phase I recommendations listed below is located in Appendix A. The following improvements are recommended for Phase I implementation at Fork Creek Mountain Park:

- playground area
 - concrete walkways at periphery of playground
 - mulch playground surface
 - playground equipment
- Refurbish existing parking area
 - Refurbish asphalt surface
 - Re-stripe parking spaces
- Park signage
 - Provide new park signage in accordance with DeKalb Parks and Recreation standards.
 - Install additional ‘way-finding’ signage along River Road and Panthersville Road
- Replace existing equipment
 - New picnic tables
 - New waste receptacles
- Potential alternate bid items to consider:
 - Picnic Shelter Package
 - Picnic shelter
 - Concrete pad
 - 2 barbeque grills
 - 4 picnic tables
 - Interpretive signage

PHASE II – Phase II should complete improvements and amenities begun in Phase I, and focus on implementation of the Day Use Recreation Area and the Agricultural Interpretive Area as proposed in the Draft Master Plan.

The following improvements are recommended for Phase II:

- **DAY USE RECREATION AREA**
 - Parking Area
 - ± 40 spaces (optional pervious surface)
 - Pedestrian scale security lighting
 - Bollards to prevent public vehicular access
 - Playground Area
 - Additional/supplementary equipment
 - Separate age groups (<5 yrs, 5-12 yrs.)
 - Bonded rubber surface
 - provide pedestrian connection from parking spaces to proposed trails

- Picnic Shelters
 - water service
 - electric service
 - barbeque grills
 - waste receptacles
- Restroom Building
 - Exterior water service
 - Timer-controlled access
 - Barrier-free access
- 8' wide concrete walkway
 - access from parking area to playground
- Trailhead
 - To Natural/Cultural Resource Area
 - Interpretive signage
 - Park information and way-finding signage
- **AGRICULTURAL INTERPRETIVE AREA**
 - Interpretive Pavilion (garage apartment location)
 - Visitor Center/Interpretive Pavilion (main house location)
 - Restroom facility
 - Utilize existing infrastructure of Caskey Farm main house
 - Renovate existing barn as Agricultural Interpretive Pavilion
 - 8' wide concrete walkway
 - access from parking area
 - shared parking with Day Use Area and Meadow Area
 - bus parking in close proximity to main house structure
 - 6' wide crushed stone path
 - align pathways to reflect farm building layout
 - connection to Day Use Area, Meadow Area and Natural/Cultural Area
 - Maintenance and security access
- **MEADOW AREA**
 - Parking Area
 - ± 160 spaces (optional pervious surface)
 - Pedestrian scale security lighting
 - Bollards to prevent public vehicular access
 - shared parking with Day Use Area and Meadow Area
 - 8' wide concrete walkway
 - access from parking area to adjacent facilities
 - Community Garden
 - ±5,000 sf area
 - Enclose with fencing
 - Storage shed
 - Water service
 - Open Play Area
 - Refine the existing cleared area by smoothing grades, planting turf grass and shade trees to the south of the Community Garden
 - Picnic Shelters
 - water service
 - electric service

- barbeque grills
- waste receptacles
- 6' wide crushed stone path
 - connection to Day Use Area, Education Area and Natural/Cultural Area
 - Maintenance and security access

PHASE III – Phase III should include completion of the elements proposed in the Draft Master Plan for Fork Creek Mountain Park.

The following improvements are recommended for Phase II:

- **EDUCATION ACTIVITY AREA**
 - Education Activity Center
 - ±4,000 sf
 - Flexible spaces:
 - Classrooms
 - Meeting rooms
 - Library spaces
 - Display spaces for archaeological artifacts
 - Parking Area
 - ± 45 spaces (optional pervious surface)
 - Loading/unloading lane
 - Bus parking spaces
 - Bollards to prevent public vehicular access
 - shared parking with Meadow Area
 - Pedestrian scale security lighting
 - 8' wide concrete walkway
 - access from parking area to adjacent facilities
 - 6' wide crushed stone path
 - connection to Day Use Area, Meadow Area and Natural/Cultural Area
 - Maintenance and security access
 - Outdoor Classroom
 - Outdoor plaza integrated with Education Center
 - ±75 capacity
 - Capability for performances, presentations
 - Outdoor classroom
 - Traditional, informal construction
 - ±50 capacity
 - Park information and way-finding signage
 - Pedestrian scale security lighting
- **NATURAL/CULTURAL RESOURCE AREA**
 - 4' wide natural surface trails
 - Utilize existing trail corridors
 - connections to all other park areas
 - Interpretive signage
 - Park information and way-finding signage

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Due to the requirements associated with the archaeological sensitivity of the park, it will be critical for the design, engineering and construction processes to be carefully coordinated with regulatory authorities to insure efficient and cost-effective implementation of the Master Plan. Following review and approval of this report and the Draft Master Plan for Fork Creek Mountain Park, it will be appropriate to consider the effect of regulatory requirements regarding the implementation of the Draft Master Plan. The following list identifies key regulatory agencies and issues:

- **Water Quality and Stormwater Management:** Although the quality of the ponds and streams in Fork Creek Mountain Park is relatively high for metropolitan Atlanta, early coordination with the DeKalb County Watershed Management Department is recommended to discuss the County's long-term goals and site-specific requirements. Construction of new pavement and other impervious surfaces will require that stormwater runoff be managed in accordance with DeKalb County requirements.
- **Wetland Impacts:** Impacts to wetlands and streams fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. No proposed bridge crossings or wetland impacts are proposed in the Draft Master Plan.
- **Stream Buffer Variances.** The State of Georgia mandates a 25' undisturbed buffer on each side of perennial streams. DeKalb County regulates an additional 50' buffer. No stream buffer encroachments are proposed in the Draft Master Plan.
- **Greenspace Bond:** Use of Greenspace Property is restricted in terms of utilities, public facilities, trails and paths, and access facilities such that the overall coverage is less than 15% of the total greenspace property. For Fork Creek Mountain Park, this equates to a total coverage within greenspace property of 3 acres.
- **Cultural Resources:** Because Fork Creek Mountain Park lies within the Soapstone Ridge Historic District the Master Plan, as well as construction documents, need to be provided to the DeKalb County Historic Preservation Department for distribution to the appropriate review agencies.

PARK DESIGN and ENGINEERING

The first step towards completing the design and engineering for park and recreation facilities is to confirm the master plan upon which the park design will be based. It is preferable to complete additional analysis and hold extensive discussions at the master plan level to confirm support for the proposed park design than to reach a level of completion of design/engineering documents before determining that changes are needed. The following list, in chronological order, includes initial confirmation and subsequent steps required to complete the park design and engineering process for implementation of the Master Plan for Fork Creek Mountain Park. (Note: it is assumed that, as a County-sponsored construction project, the approach to park development will be conventional design-bid-build. Should it be decided that an alternate approach is desired, such as design-build, the steps required to complete park design and engineering will be altered.)

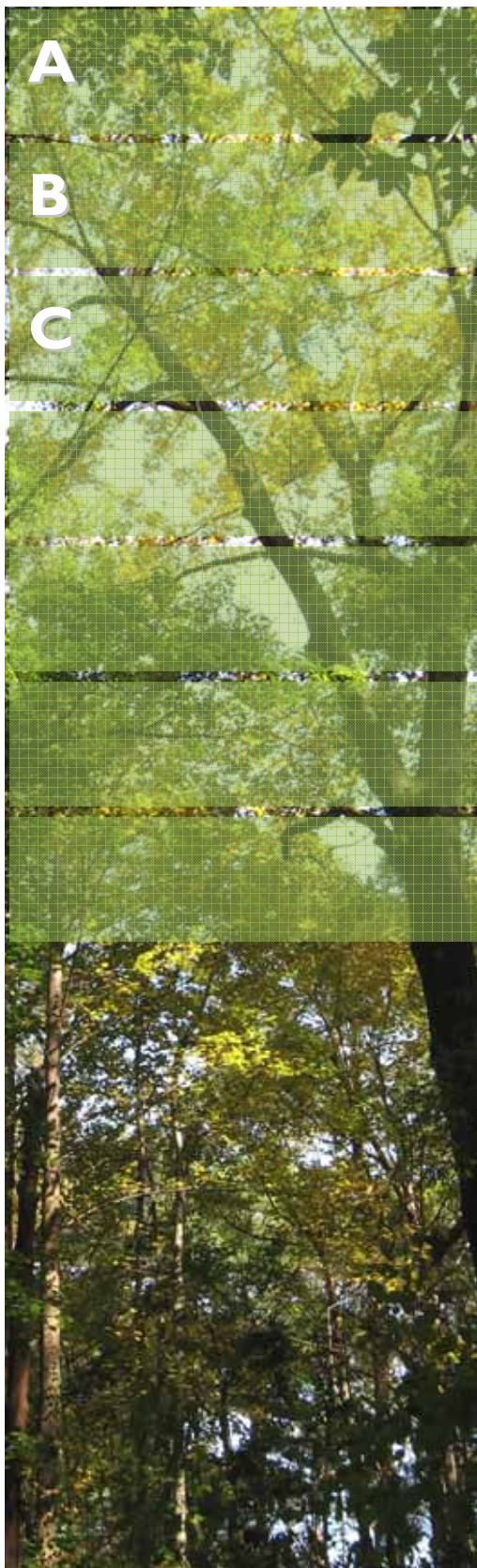
1. Complete a ground-run topographic survey of areas to be developed with new recreation facilities (portions of the site may not require ground-run topographic survey).
2. Confirm approval/acceptance of Master Plan (or Phase I portion) before proceeding (including review with regulatory authorities).
3. Complete geotechnical investigation for areas planned for buildings and areas where significant grading is proposed (to confirm depth to bedrock).
4. Complete design development level drawings (30% complete drawings).
5. Complete design development level opinion of probable cost.
6. Confirm approval/acceptance of design development documents.
7. Complete draft construction documents (90% complete drawings).
8. Complete draft construction documents level opinion of probable cost.
9. Confirm approval/acceptance of draft construction documents.

10. Complete final construction documents.
11. Complete final project bid documents and specifications.
12. Issue project for general contractor bids.

IMPLEMENTATION

During the planning and design process, thought should be given to the development of a maintenance program for new park facilities. Careful consideration should be given to the observation and assessment of the effect of construction on existing park amenities, such as trails and open play areas. Finally, the selection of a qualified construction contractor is the first and most critical step in the park construction process. It will be critical for the construction team to be experienced in parks and recreation facilities construction and also demonstrate an understanding of the factors involved with construction in sensitive environmental areas. Construction project oversight should involve a design professional who is familiar with park and recreation engineering as well as park design, and who can conduct effective coordination with regulatory agencies throughout the construction process.

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Opinion of Probable Construction Costs

APPENDIX

A

Opinion of Probable Construction Cost (DRAFT)
FORK CREEK MOUNTAIN PARK - DeKalb County , Georgia
Draft Master Plan - OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION

ITEM DESCRIPTION	UNIT	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	COST (rounded)
benches	L.S.	24	\$1,200.00	\$ 28,800
bicycle racks (4 loops)	L.S.	2	\$800.00	\$ 1,600
bollards	L.S.	12	\$750.00	\$ 9,000
community garden	S.F.	5,000	\$10.00	\$ 50,000
demolish Caskey garage, construct pavilion	S.F.	750	\$100.00	\$ 75,000
demolish Caskey house, construct pavilion/restroom	S.F.	1,850	\$200.00	\$ 370,000
Education Activity Center building	S.F.	4,200	\$200.00	\$ 840,000
erosion & sediment control measures	L.S.	1	\$100,000.00	\$ 100,000
fishing pier (large)	S.F.	850	\$40.00	\$ 34,000
fishing pier (small)	S.F.	250	\$40.00	\$ 10,000
interpretive signage	L.S.	16	\$5,000.00	\$ 80,000
kiosk/call box	L.S.	2	\$5,000.00	\$ 10,000
outdoor classroom	allowance	1	\$10,000.00	\$ 10,000
outdoor classroom (adj. to Ed. Ctr.)	S.F.	2,275	\$50.00	\$ 113,800
outdoor laboratory (structure & pier)	S.F.	875	\$75.00	\$ 65,625
parking - curb & gutter	L.F.	5,150	\$18.00	\$ 92,700
pavement - asphalt	S.F.	66,500	\$4.00	\$ 266,000
pedestrian scale lighting	L.S.	12	\$4,000.00	\$ 48,000
picnic shelter*	L.S.	3	\$35,000.00	\$ 105,000
playground (equipment & surface)	L.S.	12,000	\$18.00	\$ 216,000
refurbish Black's farm pond	allowance	1	\$75,000.00	\$ 75,000
refurbish Caskey farm pond	allowance	1	\$150,000.00	\$ 150,000
renovate Caskey barn	S.F.	1,500	\$125.00	\$ 187,500
restroom building	L.S.	1	\$125,000.00	\$ 125,000
trails - 4' wide natural surface	S.F.	29,000	\$1.50	\$ 43,500
trails - 6' wide crushed stone	S.F.	26,750	\$3.00	\$ 80,300
paths - 8' wide concrete	S.F.	35,000	\$5.00	\$ 175,000
trees - large	L.S.	75	\$350.00	\$ 26,250
trees - small	L.S.	35	\$150.00	\$ 5,250
waste receptacles	L.S.	12	\$750.00	\$ 9,000
SUB-TOTAL				\$ 3,402,325
20% CONTINGENCY FACTOR				\$ 680,465
TOTAL				\$ 4,082,790

1. Quantities based on MASTER PLAN for Fork Creek Mountain Park, dated May 1, 2010.
 2. Prices items include estimated delivery and installation costs in addition to the catalog price of the item.
 3. This "Opinion of Probable Construction Costs" is made on the basis of MACTEC's judgment as experienced and qualified professionals generally familiar with recreation development projects. Cost items and estimated quantities were determined for the Master Plan. Unit costs were based on pricing from product suppliers, data published in the RS Means publication "Site Work and Landscape Cost Data", and GDOT published costs. The expected accuracy for this Opinion of Probable Construction Costs is in the range of $\pm 20\%$. However, since MACTEC has no control over the cost of labor, materials, equipment, or services furnished by others, or over the construction contractor's methods of determining prices, or over competitive bidding or market conditions, MACTEC cannot and does not guarantee that proposals, bids, or actual construction cost will not vary from MACTEC's prepared Opinion of Probable Construction Costs or the above stated accuracy range.
 4. This Opinion of Probable Construction Cost does not include design consultation fees for items requiring additional design.
 5. 'L.S.' = Lump Sum. 'S.F.' = Square Feet.
- * Includes 2 barbecue grills, concrete pad, water & electrical services, and 4 picnic tables)

Meeting Minutes

APPENDIX

B

Fork Creek Mountain Park – Master Plan
MEETING MINUTES – STAFF MEETING

SUBJECT: **FORK CREEK MOUNTAIN MASTER PLAN – KICK-OFF MEETING**
DATE: November 20, 2009, 2:30 PM
PLACE: 330 West Ponce de Leon Ave., 4th Floor Conference Room
PRESENT: DeKalb County: Commissioner Gannon, Revonda Moody, Rita Morgan, David Cullison, Dave Butler
MACTEC: Jon Hart

- Explanation of Scope of Work (Master Plan, Public Meetings, Construction Drawings)
- 3 Public Meetings are milestones in the Master Plan process
 - o Initial Public Meeting gathers input from community
 - o Second Public Meeting presents alternative concepts
 - o Third Public Meeting delivers final master plan
- River Road Community Coalition is the main community group for Fork Creek Mtn. Park. This group has led park cleanup efforts.
- Need to utilize the RRCC mailing list for getting the word out about our public meetings
- Improvements have been made to the existing picnic park and Revonda has led an effort to make improvements here also. In addition, there have been plans for the area adjacent to the existing picnic park for a playground area and a community garden.
- Trails have been flagged throughout the 100 acres by PRD.
- There are many schools in the immediate proximity to the park. ‘Teaching’ Park concept is especially strong here.
- Revonda shared a vision for the park that includes activities ‘like we used to do when we went to the park as children’. This includes a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities (horseshoes, fishing, bicycling, pavilions, picnic areas, walking trails, horse-back riding...) centered around a Community Center Building. The building provides the threshold between the community and the park environment.
- Community Center: this has been discussed within the community and by PRD. A conceptual sketch using a ‘Wade Walker’ model has been produced. However, more study needs to be done related to demographics, concentration of population, etc. to determine where the most appropriate location for a Community Center needs to be.
 - o Note: the next locations for community centers will be in District 2 and District 5...
- The park may lend itself to facilitating overnight camping for Scouts and PRD-sponsored camping programs.
- There is an understood need to provide recreation opportunity for the 9-18 age-group. Consider:

Fork Creek Mountain Park – Master Plan
MEETING MINUTES – STAFF MEETING

- Camping (see above)
- Rockwalls/climbing walls
- Exercise stations
- Basketball (with cover like County Line Park?)
- Night hikes (like Arabia Mtn.)
- Fishing in one of the ponds
- Learning / demonstration pond
- Community Garden is highly desired here.
- The area adjacent to the Caskey Farm lends itself to being an Agricultural Interpretive Area. The existing home could be an Interpretive Center.
- Need to obtain any assessments prepared by the County related to the condition of the two homes, barns, outbuildings, etc.
- Provide a network of walking trail loops.
- Park's recreation opportunities should be available year-round for all age groups (intergenerational).
- PRD has concerns about the issue of commitment to programming, i.e. we can build a community center but can we staff it and provide relevant programs?
- Promises were made for an expansion of County Line Park when Lou Walker exchanged some property in this area. County Line Park is in District 7. This is an issue that may be presented by the community at the public meetings.
- Two different communities effected: County Line Community and River Road Community.

Fork Creek Mountain Park – Master Plan
MEETING MINUTES – STAFF MEETING

SUBJECT: **FORK CREEK MOUNTAIN MASTER PLAN – STAFF SITE WALK**
DATE: November 30, 2009, 9:00 PM
PLACE: on site
PRESENT: DeKalb County: Revonda Moody, David Cullison
MACTEC: Jon Hart, Todd Hill

Site walk limited to one hour due to rain.

Observed evidence of archaeological ‘workshop’ sites (rather than ‘quarries’) where pottery may have been formed by Native Americans. The group walked approximately 150’ inside the periphery of the park in a clockwise direction beginning at the soapstone ridge that extends southward from the existing picnic area, observing several ‘workshop’ areas, agricultural terraces, two spring-fed streams, a spring-fed water collection pool, an open area adjacent to homes located along the western side of River Ridge Court, the existing farmsteads and the two existing ponds. No apparent evidence existed as to why the pond on the Black Farm does not hold water. Other items discussed during the walk:

- Artifacts collected from on site may be stored at Brook Run Park
- David will contact Dave Crass (state Archaeologist)

Fork Creek Mountain Park – Master Plan
MEETING MINUTES – PUBLIC MEETING #1

SUBJECT: **FORK CREEK MOUNTAIN PARK MASTER PLAN**
DATE: January 21, 2010
PLACE: Cedar Grove High School
PRESENT: DeKalb County: Revonda Moody, Sue Pickens, John Anderson, Rita Morgan
MACTEC: Jon Hart, Todd Hill, Lee Sewell

INTRODUCTION: Discussion regarding the process that will be used to develop a Master Plan for Fork Creek Mountain Park, including inventory and analysis of existing site conditions, public input meetings, presentation of alternative concepts, and development of recommendations for the park. Based on cost estimates for the recommendations, available funding and community input, priorities will then established for the implementation of the recommendations.

The presentation included the following:

- Vicinity map with 1-mile, 2-mile & 3-mile service areas surrounding Fork Creek Mtn. Park
- Aerial Photograph (DeKalb GIS) with illustrations of the original park, the Caskey Farm and Blacks Farm
- Existing conditions: photographic summary
- Existing Conditions Exhibit: DeKalb GIS information supplemented with on-site observations
- Slope Analysis Exhibit: illustrates slope steepness and capability for development of recreation facilities

Design Vocabulary Powerpoint slide-show:

- Crushed Stone Trail
- Nature Trail
- Mulch surface for Trail
- Natural Surface Trail
- Concrete Trail
- Existing Roads
- Bike Trails
- Park Signs

Fork Creek Mountain Park – Master Plan
MEETING MINUTES – PUBLIC MEETING #1

- Plant Species
- Community Bulletin Board
- Bridges
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Observation Deck
- Picnic Shelter
- Shade Shelter
- Arbor Trellis
- Gazebos
- Restrooms
- Playground
- Safety Surface
- Counsel Ring
- Outdoor Classroom
- Community Garden

Approximately 15 citizens attended the meeting. The following items were discussed:

- Park's natural features: soapstone ridge and archeological significance, history as farms, ponds, limits
- Who maintains the park? [DeKalb County South District Maintenance Division]
- Adjacency to neighborhoods. [concerns with users cutting through yards, controlled access, need for buffer]
- Community Center feasibility? [May not be able to put on site due to green space designation, but would like an indoor pool and basketball courts]
- Will the park create jobs? [not directly but will indirectly through construction, maintenance, etc.]
- Important to maintain balance between park use and preservation of cultural area/soapstone ridge.
- Botanical Garden possibility? [provide seasonal change, native plant species]
- Reuse of existing structures on site? [any historical significance, preserve history as horse farm, possibly a museum of some sort]
- Some commented they like park 'as is'.

Fork Creek Mountain Park – Master Plan
MEETING MINUTES – PUBLIC MEETING #1

- Well lit walking track as a possibility.
- Could provide educational opportunities? [outdoor classrooms/council rings, information signs on Native American history of the site]
- Could the park house live animals as an educational opportunity? [would provide education, does create maintenance issues]
- Wildlife has been noticed on site. [buzzards, turtles, deer, etc.]
- Would like a bus drop off.
- Important to provide opportunity for connection with nature as well as modern interests.
- Community Garden? [strongly supported]
- Interested Community Groups: River Walk Ridge Association, Cedar Grove Neighborhood Association

COMMENT SHEETS

Comment Sheet Number 1:

- *Walking trail*
- *Fishing area at pond*
- *Old house as restroom area*
- *Botanical garden area*
- *Picnic shelter-wood*
- *Gazebo*
- *Playground*
- *Security lights-solar*
- *Community center-old house*
- *Outdoor classrooms*

Comment Sheet Number 2:

- *Buffer between property and park*
- *Playground*

Fork Creek Mountain Park – Master Plan
MEETING MINUTES – PUBLIC MEETING #1

- *Picnic tables & how many*
- *Restrooms (monitored daily)*
- *One main house museum & artifacts*
- *Natural walking trail*

Comment Sheet Number 3:

- *Place solar call boxes*
- *Color code mile markers*
- *Camera's around restroom area*
- *Adequate lighting in the dark area of the park*

Comment Sheet Number 4:

- *Prefer parking outside of the park, move playground if needed. Use eastern ball field if necessary.*
- *No interest in formal garden area at highest point.*
- *Prefer arbor shade shelter- wood- rustic.*
- *Put rest room at or next to pool area instead of inside the middle of park.*
- *Need pedestrian bridge west of waterfall.*
- *Want greater open space at center of park with a bike rack.*
- *East ball field is never used as it stays wet for long periods of time.*
- *Smaller area toward bleachers could be used as a playground with minimal expense or improvement.*

Comment Sheet Number 5:

- *It can be an outside and indoors park.*
- *Indoor park you can have a food court, basketball court, football field, water slides, swimming pool, dance class, a track inside, weight room, little kids park, babysitting, bowling, painting room, steam room, Jacuzzi.*
- *For outdoors, it could have cookout stuff, a lake to fish, dog park, walking/running track, water park, wave pool, lazy pool, Go kart/bike track, rock climbing, fireworks area, boat rides*

Fork Creek Mountain Park – Master Plan
MEETING MINUTES – PUBLIC MEETING #2

SUBJECT: FORK CREEK MOUNTAIN PARK MASTER PLAN
DATE: March 18, 2010
PLACE: Cedar Grove High School
PRESENT: DeKalb County: Commissioner Gannon, Commissioner May, Revonda Moody, Sue Pickens, David Cullison, Rita Morgan
MACTEC: Jon Hart, Todd Hill

This meeting was a 'reschedule' of the meeting held on February 18.

INTRODUCTION: Discussion regarding the process that will be used to develop a Master Plan for Fork Creek Mountain Park, including inventory and analysis of existing site conditions, public input meetings, presentation of alternative concepts, and development of recommendations for the park. Based on cost estimates for the recommendations, available funding and community input, priorities will then established for the implementation of the recommendations.

Approximately 20 citizens attended the meeting. The following items were discussed:

- Clarification: the park acreage is approximately 55 acres
- MACTEC gave a brief presentation outlining the master plan process and presented the initial master plan alternatives. An explanation of the restrictions imposed upon properties purchased with Greenspace Bond funds was provided. In summary, a maximum of 15% of the total land area can be used for recreation.
- Why is Black's Farm pond dry? [outlet control probably open for draining]
- Will there be lighting? [yes, pedestrian scale lighting for added security]
- When will park be open? [park closes at dark]
- Will there be extended parking? [we don't anticipate the need for 'extra' parking, ie the park should be designed for typical occupancy, not maximum occupancy]
- Is the park open or fenced? [most of the park's periphery is fenced, typically don't install fencing. It may be appropriate to improve some lengths of fence]
- How large is the education facility? [4,000 sf]
- Parking quantity? [±145 spaces]
- What about traffic congestion? [master plan will be submitted to transportation department for review. However, this type of facility does not typically increase traffic or contribute to a decreased level of service for roadways. Use

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MEETING MINUTES – PUBLIC MEETING #2

would be staggered throughout the day as opposed to athletic complexes which have high rates of ingress/egress during short periods of time]

- Will utilizing the existing buildings create a danger? [the buildings would be renovated to code. The feasibility of this needs to be studied in more detail. Preliminary evaluation suggests that the Black's farm house would not be a capable building for recreation.]
- Will anything be built on the soapstone ridge? [no buildings or parking – trails, benches etc. only.]
- The springs be used as interpretive learning points.
- Phasing? [Phase I budget is approximately \$220,000. During the 3rd meeting, priorities will be identified and an Implementation Phasing Strategy will be developed after the meeting.]
- Priorities: parking, pavilions, community garden and trails
- Would like to see a pavilion in Phase 1
- We could utilize volunteer groups to help supplement the development
- A 'Friends of Fork Creek Mountain Park' group could be formed
- What signage in Phase 1? [County has developed a standard park sign that would be included]
- Who picks up the trash? [Park Services and Sanitation Department]
- What is the River Road Coalition? [neighborhood coalition, has website and newsletter, has participated in park clean-up efforts
- Commissioner May: in the process of working with Congressman Scott to get appropriations for a community center. This may not happen at FCMP but it should happen in this area...]
- Will there be exercise trails? [we can have exercise stations along the trails, this may not be affordable in Phase 1]

The presentation included the following:

- Vicinity map with 1-mile, 2-mile & 3-mile service areas surrounding Fork Creek Mtn. Park
- Aerial Photograph (DeKalb GIS) with illustrations of the original park, the Caskey Farm and Blacks Farm
- Existing conditions: photographic summary
- Existing Conditions Exhibit: DeKalb GIS information supplemented with on-site observations
- Slope Analysis Exhibit: illustrates slope steepness and capability for development of recreation facilities
- Alternative 1 Conceptual Plan
- Alternative 2 Conceptual Plan

Fork Creek Mountain Park – Master Plan
MEETING MINUTES – PUBLIC MEETING #3

SUBJECT: **FORK CREEK MOUNTAIN PARK MASTER PLAN**
DATE: May 1, 2010
PLACE: Fork Creek Mountain Park
PRESENT: DEKALB COUNTY: Commissioner Gannon, Revonda Moody, Sue Pickens, David Cullison
MACTEC: Jon Hart

MACTEC presented a summary of the planning process that was used to develop the Draft Master Plan for Fork Creek Mountain Park, including inventory and analysis of existing site conditions, the first and second public input meetings, presentation of alternative concepts, and development of recommendations for the park. An explanation of the restrictions imposed upon properties purchased with Greenspace Bond funds was provided (a maximum of 15% of the total land area can be used for recreation). Approximately 10 citizens attended the meeting. MACTEC gave a brief presentation outlining the master plan process and presented the Draft Master Plan. The following facilities were proposed for the Draft Master Plan:

• **Day Use Activity Area**

- Expand existing parking (±43 spaces)
 - utilize Caskey Farm driveway to align with Seabass Road
 - accel/decel lanes in accordance w/Trans. Dept.
- Playground area with Picnic Shelters and Restroom Building
- Trails:
 - Paved surfaces around playground and along parking area
 - Crushed stone secondary trails
 - Soft-surface nature trails
 - Connectivity to Agricultural Interpretive Area

• **Agricultural Interpretive Area**

- Demolish Caskey House, adapt existing utility infrastructure and construct pavilion/restroom building that interprets the form of the existing house on the actual house site
- Demolish Caskey garage/apartment building, construct pavilion that interprets the form of the existing garage and reinforces the ‘farmstead’ spaces
- Renovate Caskey Farm barn to function as interpretive element and icon for the park
- Trails:

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- Reinforce the existing geometry & layout of the Caskey Farm site
- Paved surface along parking areas
- Crushed stone trails in all other areas
- Connectivity to Day Use Area and Meadow Area
- **Meadow Activity Area**
 - Vehicular connection between Day Use Area and Education Center Area
 - Align driveway with Forest Downs Trace
 - Parking along River Road frontage (±75 spaces)
 - Community Garden
 - Fruit Tree Orchard
 - Fishing Pond
 - Fishing piers
 - Peripheral trail
 - Trails:
 - Paved surface along parking areas
 - Crushed stone trails for connectivity to Day Use Area and Education Area
- **Education Activity Area**
 - Education Activity Center Building
 - ±4,000 sf
 - Classroom/meeting room
 - Library
 - Archaeological Resource Exhibits (display recovered artifacts from Fork Creek Mtn. Park)
 - Outdoor Classroom (adjacent to bldg. exterior)
 - ‘formal’ structure/layout
 - Venue for community events
 - Parking area (±44 spaces)
 - 2 bus parking spaces
 - Drop-off area
 - Trails:
 - Paved surface along parking areas and adjacent to Ed. Bldg.

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- Crushed stone trails for connectivity to Meadow Activity Area and Cultural Resource Area
- Pond
 - Outdoor Science Laboratory
 - Biology
 - Limnology
- Outdoor Classroom
 - 'informal' structure/layout
 - Venue for educational activities
- **Vegetative Buffer along eastern park boundary**
 - ±75' width
 - Supplement existing plantings with native species
- **Cultural Resource Area**
 - Interpretive signage
 - Trails: improve existing trails & supplement with new soft-surface nature trails for connectivity to Day Use Area, Meadow Area, Education Area

After the presentation of the Draft Master Plan, the following items were discussed:

- Need to provide activities for the 12-18 year age group. [fishing, hiking, bicycling, etc. are proposed. Also, programs for the Education Center could include after-school activities, summer art programs, science/exploration, etc.]
- What about Frisbee golf? [the park could be capable of this but it may not be a suitable use]
- Is the playground too close to the parking? [In this case, the playground has been moved further from the parking than is typical in most parks]
- Like the inclusion of art-oriented activities. There needs to be an outlet for this in the community.
- The community garden is a great idea.
- What about additional funding availability? [County Departments are pursuing grants such as CDBG, 'stimulus' funding, etc. Specifically, a grant application for the provision of fruit trees for the orchard is pending approval.]
- Could we consider renovating the Caskey Farm Home? [The recommendation is to demolish and construct an interpretation of the home that would function as an interpretive pavilion. This recommendation considers the typically high cost of renovation in terms of the historic value of the existing structure and the recurring maintenance

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MEETING MINUTES – PUBLIC MEETING #3

costs associated with upkeep of renovated buildings. However, further studies can be conducted to evaluate the historic value and determine the most effective solution.]

- We should develop an oral history of the Caskey and Black Farms, as well as collect photographs and video documentation before park development begins.
- Could you add a tennis court? [the team will consider this addition]

After a brief tour of the Caskey Farm area, a discussion ensued regarding implementation of Phase 1 for the park (current funding for the park was presented to be approximately \$180,000). Priorities suggested by the group were:

- Pond rehabilitation
- Trails, access and connectivity
- Cleanup, general maintenance
- ‘Lay the groundwork’ for future construction
- Education Activity Building
- Paved, inner-loop trails for seniors and handicapped park users

The presentation included the following:

- Vicinity map with 1-mile, 2-mile & 3-mile service areas surrounding Fork Creek Mtn. Park
- Aerial Photograph (DeKalb GIS)
- Slope Analysis Exhibit: illustrates slope steepness and capability for development of recreation facilities
- Draft Master Plan (with 11x17 hand-outs)
- Draft Master Plan Enlargement (with 11x17 hand-outs)
- Photo-collage Board with images representing examples of Education Center Buildings, Playground Areas, Outdoor Classrooms, Community Gardens, Interpretive Signage, Pavilions, etc.

References

List of References

- DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, June 2009
- A Nomination of Soapstone Ridge as a Historic District in DeKalb County, Georgia, submitted by The Greater Atlanta Archaeological Society, April 9, 1997.