

Chapter 15

Parks and Recreation

PARKS AND RECREATION: INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreation facilities and services are provided to Greensboro by 246 full-time and 53 part-time employees in five departmental divisions. Those divisions are Administrative Services; Youth and Community Services; Cultural Programs and Regional Parks; Special Facilities and Landscape Management; and Bur-Mil Park and Watershed Parks. Principal facility types include Parks (mini, neighborhood, community, magnet, regional, beautification, and natural areas), Recreation Centers, Special Facilities, and Watershed Parks and Trails.

Greensboro once had the highest parkland to population ratio of any North Carolina city. Other cities such as Raleigh and High Point have now met or exceeded Greensboro's ratio. Five regional parks, including three public golf courses, represent over one-half of Greensboro's park system of 3,480 acres. Greensboro's system also has over 60 miles of trails.

For the ninth year, the National Arbor Day Foundation has named Greensboro Tree City USA. The National Gold Medal Award of The Sports Foundation, given in recognition of excellence in parks and recreation management, was presented to the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department in 1979 and 1987 for its outstanding programs and services, the best in the country in the population class of 100,000 to 250,000.

A Parks and Recreation master plan for the City of Greensboro was completed in 1998. This comprehensive plan, with recommended completion by 2017, provides strategies for programming and for the planning of parks and recreational programs. The Plan includes six community parks, 16 neighborhood parks, 20 miles of greenway, 36 ball fields, five swimming pools, two recreation centers, and a community center. The plan also outlines strategies for developing partnership opportunities with public, quasi-public, and private agencies to provide leisure services and facilities.

Greensboro citizens recently approved bond funding of \$34,200,000. The planned capital improvement program includes the construction of Barber and Southwest Recreation Centers, development of Keeley and Carolyn S. Allen Community Parks, replacement of Simkins Sports Pavilion roof, the air-conditioning of 13 recreation center gymnasiums, replacement of floors and bleachers at 12 centers, replacement of park play equipment and bleachers, renovation of park restrooms, and improvements at City lake facilities.

Greensboro and Guilford County show a history of increases in publicly preserved parks and open space. In addition, there is privately owned recreation space and open space that has not been counted. Environmental regulations such as stream buffer requirements and wetland protection will continue to assist in the protection of open spaces in the future.

PARKS AND RECREATION: SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

A citizen driven Master Plan completed in 1998 guides the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department.

The five departmental divisions provide facilities, services, and programs on approxi-

mately ,500 acres of parkland and over 60 miles of trails. Greensboro's long time lead in the ratio of parkland to population has now been met or exceeded by Raleigh and High Point.

The recently completed master plan included recommendations to expand existing parkland through the addition of six community parks, 16 neighborhood parks, and 20 miles of new trails and greenways over the next fifteen years. The master plan also recommended program expansion to meet the needs of the growing City by adding 36 ball fields, five swimming pools, two recreation centers, and a community center.

Strong citizen approval of the master plan was evident during the November 2000 bond referendum in which citizens approved \$34.2 million to improve Greensboro parks and recreation facilities.

Guilford County Parks and Open Space Inventory

The Guilford County Open Space Committee compiled an inventory of existing parkland and open space in 1999. The inventory did not include common property owned by residential associations, remaining parcels from highway construction, and utility rights of way. The inventory provided major open space and parkland acreage, including 7,035 acres of parkland, 5,380 acres of surface water, 5,274 acres of watershed land, 900 acres of farmland, and 784 acres of flood plain or open space.

The inventory indicated that 4.7 percent of the total acreage within Guilford County is protected by some type of government ownership or conservation easement. Guilford County has a total of 417,308 land acres, of which 19,561 (including 5,380 acres of surface water) are currently protected.

Greensboro Parks and Recreation

The Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department provides parks of all sizes for Greensboro's citizens. They include mini parks (or pocket parks), which are one to four acres and serve primarily small areas, neighborhood parks, which are 5 to 15 acres and serve a population up to 5,000, and community parks, which are 16 to 75 acres and serve an area of two miles. Other parks are classified as distinctive and/or assorted facilities, which are 76 to 200 acres in size. These parks exist to enhance or use special features of the area.

Trails are found throughout Greater Greensboro, and are paved or hiking in type, and vary in their length.

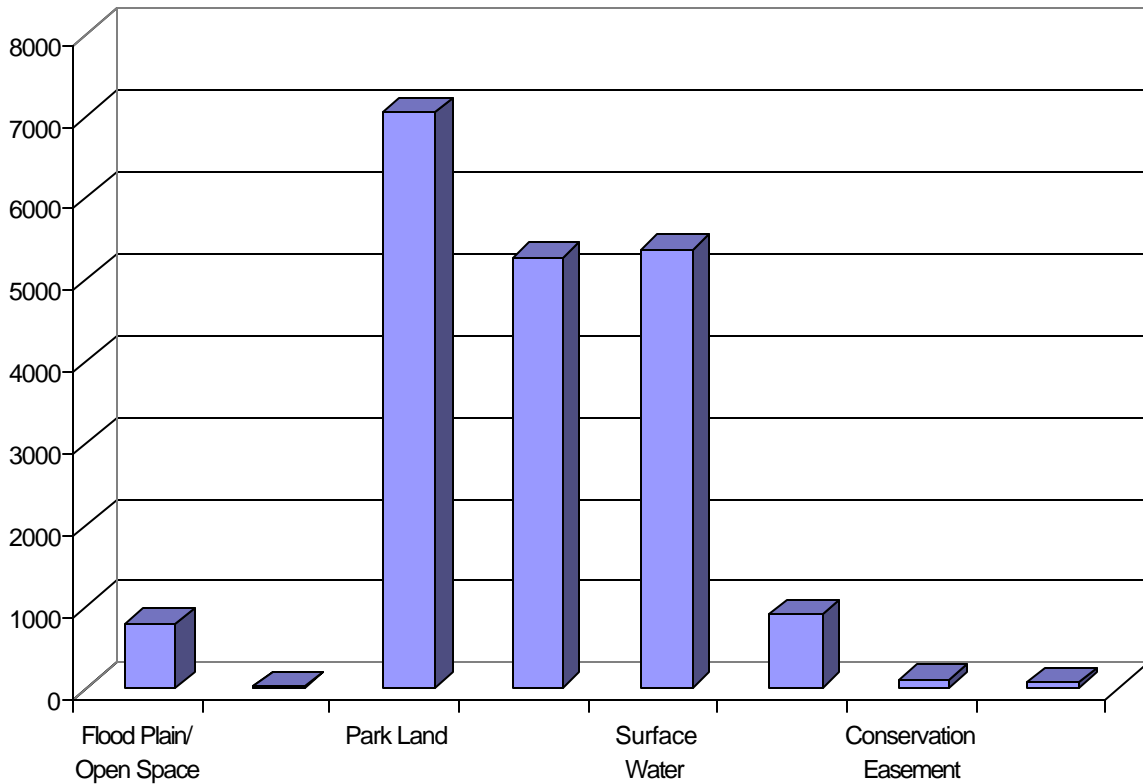
Guilford County Parks and Recreation

In 2000, Guilford County contained approximately 7,390 acres in parks and recreation facilities. Of those acres, Greensboro provides approximately 3,480 acres, or 47 percent of the County total.

Table 15-1: Guilford County Parks & Open Space* Inventory Summary, 1999		
Property Type	Acres	Acres Per 1,000 Persons**
Flood Plain/ Open Space	783.89	1.99
Greenway	5.44	0.01
Park Land	7,035.47	17.88
Watershed Land	5,273.61	13.40
Surface Water	5,379.51	13.67
Farm	900.15	2.29
Conservation Easement	112.10	0.28
Water Quality Conservation Easement	70.49	0.17
Total	19,560.66	49.69

Source: Guilford County Planning & Development Dept., Guilford County Open Space Report, 2000. *Includes farm land, but not public land & surface water.
 **Based upon 1999 Guilford County population est. of 393,496, Guilford County: 417,307.69 acres.

Figure 15-1: Distribution of Guilford County Open Space Acres, 1999



Source: Guilford County Planning & Development Dept., Guilford County Open Space Report, 2000. *Includes farm land, but not public land & surface water. **Based upon 1999 Guilford County population est. of 393,496, Guilford County: 417,307.69 acres.

Table 15-2: Greensboro Parks and Recreation Facilities and Acreage Totals, 2000	
Facility or Classification	Acreage
Recreation Centers & Community Parks	704.76
Magnet Parks (Bryan Park)*	1,006.00
Mini Parks	57.30
Natural Areas	190.15
Neighborhood Parks	499.55
Regional Parks	761.50
Special Facilities	260.50
Total	3,479.76

Source: Greensboro Parks & Recreation Dept., 2000. *Bryan Park is listed on the map as a Regional Park.

Table 15-3: Guilford County Parks and Recreation Facilities and Acreage Totals, 2000	
City of Greensboro	3,479.76
City of High Point	1,705.36
Guilford County Parks	1,067.00
Guilford County/ Forsyth County Park (Triad Park)	435.00
Guilford County/ City of Greensboro (Bryan Park)	534.00
Jamestown Parks	168.70
Total	7,389.82

Source: Guilford County Planning & Development Dept., 2000.