



SECTION 2 POPULATION TRENDS and PROJECTIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the County's long-range Strategic Growth Plan, seven Small Area Plans (SAPs) were developed to evaluate and assess growth patterns, public facilities, utilities, and other factors and public needs that affect Catawba County. These plans include areas of the County that are outside the municipal districts, yet within Catawba County. The adopted Small Area Plans include Mountain View, Plateau, Startown, Balls Creek, Sherrills Ford, Catawba, and St. Stephens/Oxford. (See Appendix Map 1 – Catawba County Small Area Plans) The individual SAPs will be used as a guide for future growth as County development continues.



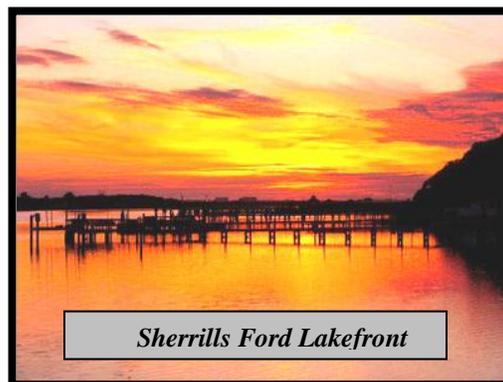
Balls Creek Camp Meeting

For the purposes of reviewing demographic information and projecting population trends, this section is divided into the seven different SAPs. These SAPs contain valuable demographic information, which will be used to evaluate the existing and future population trends. Demographic information is

reviewed to gain a better understanding of the characteristics of each community in Catawba County, to determine specific recreational needs and prioritize their development.

2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

In Catawba County, the population is somewhat evenly distributed, with 24.3% being 18 or under, 63.4% being between the age of 19 and 64, and 12.3% being 65 and older. The average Catawba County resident is 36 years old. The following table is separated into three different age groups for each SAP and also shows statistics for Catawba County as a whole, including the incorporated areas.



Sherrills Ford Lakefront



Age of Population, 2000

Table 2.2.1 – SAP Population Projections by Age

AGE	Catawba County	Mountain View	Plateau	Startown	Balls Creek	* Sherrills Ford	Catawba	St. Stephens Oxford
18 & Under	34,392 (24.3%)	2,820 (27.5%)	1,212 (24.2%)	1,006 (24.7%)	2,665 (24.7%)	2,405 (22.9%)	701 (27.0%)	5,219 (26.6%)
19 to 64	89,868 (63.4%)	6,570 (64.1%)	3,205 (64.0%)	2,606 (63.9%)	6,820 (63.3%)	6,944 (66.0%)	1,579 (60.9%)	12,718 (64.8%)
65 and Older	17,425 (12.3%)	866 (8.4%)	591 (11.8%)	464 (11.4%)	1,293 (12.0%)	1,170 (11.1%)	313 (12.1%)	1,688 (8.6%)
TOTAL	141,685 (100%)	10,256 (100%)	15,264 (100%)	4,076 (100%)	10,778 (100%)	10,519 (100%) *	2,593 (100%)	19,625 (100%)

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000; WPCOG Data Center, May 2002

* A rezoning request was approved, which will add a total of 1,500 homes in the Key Harbor Subdivision, and 14 single-family, 70 multi-family, and 135 senior housing units in a mixed use village.

2.3 POPULATION PROJECTIONS



Population statistics were used in SAP planning

Statistics from the US Census Bureau and the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) indicate that there will be substantial growth in Catawba County over the next ten years. The following table summarizes the population projections for each individual SAP and the County as a whole. The Sherrills Ford and St. Stephens/Oxford SAPs historically reflect greater population growth as compared, for instance, to the Mountain View district.



Catawba County Population Projections

Table 2.3.1 – SAP Projections

YEAR	Catawba County	Mountain View	Plateau	Startown	Balls Creek	Sherrills Ford	Catawba	St. Stephens Oxford
2000	141,685	10,256	5,008	4,076	10,788	10,519	2,593	16,625
2005	149,090	10,934	5,611	4529	11,964	11,870	2,819	22,431
2010	158,132	11,577	6,164	4973	12,958	13,258	3,030	24,685
2015	167,303	12,089	6,739	5371	14,114	14,535	3,240	26,677
Total Growth 2000 to 2015	25,618	1,833	1,731	1295	3,337	4,016	647	7,052
% Change	18.1%	16.8%	34.6%	31.8%	31.0%	38.2%	25.0%	35.9%

Source: WPCOG Data Center, May 2002, North Carolina State Demographics, 2007

Statistics from North Carolina Demographics indicate there will be a 17.4% increase in the population of Catawba County from 2015 (167,303) to 2030 (196,477).

Table 2.3.2 – Catawba County Projections

Year	Catawba County Residents	Population Increase	Percent Growth
2015	167,303		
2020	177,080	9,777	5.8%
2025	186,510	9,430	5.3%
2030	196,477	9,967	5.3%

2.4 POPULATION TRENDS

The population trends for residents of Catawba County vary somewhat but are relatively similar in relationship to age groups. According to the North Carolina Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for 2003-2008, children and senior citizens comprise two of the fastest growing groups, who are in need of more recreation opportunities.



In addition, the SCORP indicated that the number of children between the ages of 5 and 14 would continue to increase. This phenomenon is known as the “eco-boom” – meaning the parents of these children have delayed childbirth until a



later age – in favor of completing their education and starting their careers. The parents of the children in this age group acknowledge the importance of environmental and wellness issues. Due to busy lifestyles, easy accessibility to recreational opportunities with accommodating hours of operation is paramount.

The senior population is expected to increase due to in-migration of seniors from other states and additionally a longer life expectancy. The population increase of seniors will have significant impacts throughout society because of their socio-economic factors, their greater emphasis on wellness, flexible schedules, and unique recreation needs.

Developing trends are influencing the need for additional recreation services for County residents. Catawba County and the surrounding counties will continue to increase in popularity as vacation destinations. To attract and meet the needs of residents and visitors, the Parks Division will have to continually evaluate its recreation and ancillary facilities, as well as offer diverse types of recreation opportunities.



Approximately, 70,100 citizens, or 47.5%, of the population of Catawba County live outside the jurisdiction of a municipality. Municipalities and their recreation departments normally focus on active recreation. YMCA, Optimist, and the school systems in the County are also active recreation providers. The Catawba County Parks Division has focused on providing large-scale passive recreation and other unique recreational opportunities that are not offered by the municipalities. This results in more diverse recreational opportunities without redundancy. Attendance at Catawba County Parks is growing at about twice the rate of population growth for the County, near 10% annually.



Dedication of Catawba County's first dog park

- End of Section -