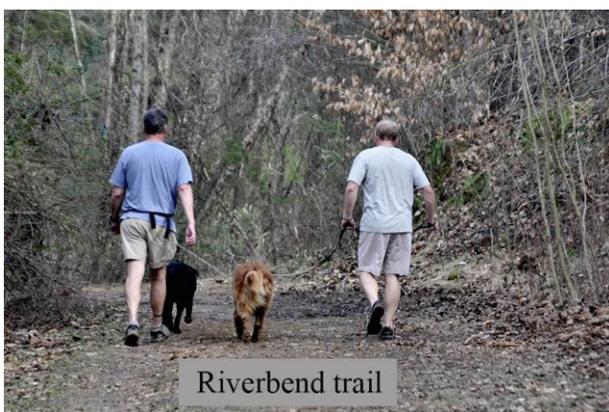


SECTION 2 POPULATION TRENDS and PROJECTIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Within 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 serve as a guide for future growth as County development continues.

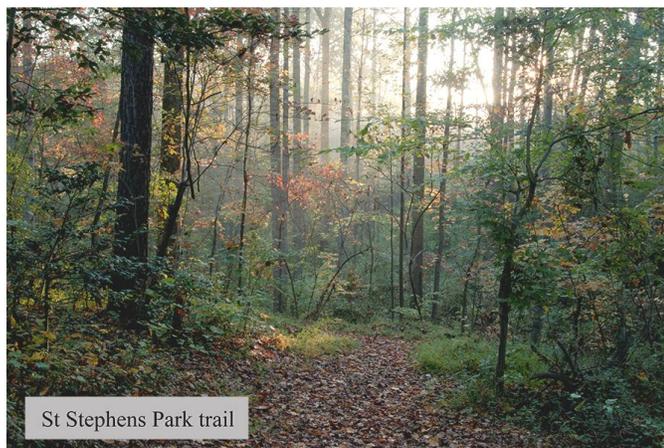


Riverbend trail

This section is divided into the seven different SAPs. These SAPs contain valuable demographic information, which evaluate the existing and future population trends. Demographic information is reviewed for understanding 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 evenly distributed, with 23.4% under 18 years of age, 34.1% between 18 and 44 years, 28.0% between 45 and 64 years, and 14.1% being 65 and older. The following table shows statistics for Catawba County as a whole, including the incorporated areas and statistics for the five different age groups for each SAP. (See *Table 2.2.1 below*)



St Stephens Park trail

Age of Population, 2010

Table 2.2.1 below shows population age groups of Catawba County residents. The column labeled “Catawba County” includes all County residents, including those living in the city and town incorporated areas, and in the unincorporated areas of the County. The remaining columns show the age breakdowns of residents in each of the seven Small Area Plans (SAPs) located in the unincorporated area of the County. Age distribution appears to be relatively uniform in the County as a whole, and also in each of the SAP’s.

Table 2.2.1 – SAP Current Population by Age

AGE	Catawba County	Mountain View	Plateau	Startown	Balls Creek	* Sherrills Ford	Catawba	St. Stephens Oxford
0 to 4	9,670 (6.3%)	713 (6.0%)	300 (5.7%)	307 (5.5%)	603 (5.2%)	662 (4.9%)	178 (6.7%)	1,402 (6.4%)
5 to 17	27,125 (17.6%)	2,355 (19.8%)	931 (17.7%)	1,081 (19.5%)	2,093 (18.1%)	2,253 (16.7%)	522 (19.7%)	4,261 (19.5%)
18 to 44	52,619 (34.1%)	3,887 (32.7%)	4,645 (31.3%)	1,709 (30.8%)	3,812 (33.0%)	4,082 (30.2%)	873 (33.0%)	7,415 (33.9%)
45 to 64	43,171 (28.0%)	3,586 (30.2%)	1,662 (31.6%)	1,721 (31.2%)	3,266 (28.3%)	4,576 (33.9%)	788 (29.8%)	6,157 (28.1%)
65 and Older	21,773 (14.1%)	1,343 (11.3%)	721 (13.7%)	723 (13.0%)	1,774 (15.4%)	1,929 (14.3%)	283 (10.7%)	2,661 (12.2%)
TOTAL	154,358 (100%)	11,884 (100%)	15,264 (100%)	5,552 (100%)	11,548 (100%)	13,502 (100%) *	2,644 (100%)	21,896 (100%)

Source: US Census Bureau, WPCOG Data Center, 2014

* A rezoning request was approved in the Sherrills Ford unincorporated area, 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 ON PROJECTIONS



Statistics from the US Census Bureau, NC Office of Management and Budget, 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, including the incorporated areas. The County is projected to grow by 10%, while the Mountain View and Sherrills Ford SAPs reflect greater population growth at 19.6% and 23.1% respectively. (See Table 2.3.1 below)

Catawba County Population Projections

Table 2.3.1 – Projections by SAP in Five-Year Increments

YEAR	Catawba County	Mountain View	Plateau	Startown	Balls Creek	Sherrills Ford	Catawba	St. Stephens Oxford
2010	154,358	11,884	5,259	5,552	11,548	13,502	2,644	21,896
2015	157,872	12,419	5,379	5,679	11,799	14,203	2,703	22,504
2020	161,833	13,002	5,514	5,822	12,073	14,976	2,768	23,177
2025	165,791	13,601	5,648	5,963	12,341	15,783	2,830	23,852
2030	169,750	14,212	5,780	6,101	12,604	16,622	2,892	24,526
Total Growth 2010 to 2030	15,393	2,328	521	549	1,056	3,120	248	2,630
% Change	10.0%	19.6%	9.9%	9.9%	9.1%	23.1%	9.4%	12.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, NC Office of Management and Budget, and WPCOG Data Center, 2014

Statistics from North Carolina Office of Management and Budget shown below indicate there will be an overall 10% increase in the population of Catawba County from 2010 (154,357) to 2030 (169,751). These population figures include both the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County. The change in population growth for people 65 and over is estimated at 71.4%. Planning for the needs of this growing senior population is prudent in determining future park amenities (See Table 2.3.2 below).

Table 2.3.2 – Catawba County Projections by Age in Five Year Increments

	Age Category	Total				
Year	0 to 4	5 to 17	18 to 44	45 to 64	65 and Over	
2010	9,670	27,125	52,619	43,171	21,773	154,358
2015	8,967	26,803	52,074	44,091	25,937	157,872
2020	9,115	25,600	52,688	44,712	29,718	161,833
2025	9,671	24,720	54,424	43,221	33,755	165,791
2030	10,216	25,057	56,064	41,096	37,318	169,751
Total Growth 2010 to 2030	546	-2,068	3,445	-2,075	15,545	15,393
% Change	5.6%	-7.6%	6.5%	-4.8%	71.4%	10.0%

Source: NC Office of Management and Budget, 2014

2.4 POPULATION TRENDS



Table 2.3.2 shown above demonstrates a decrease in population from years 2010 and 2015 for all age groups between the ages of 0 and 44. The population in age group 5 to 17 is expected to continue to decrease 8.8% through the year 2025. The group between the ages of 45 and 64 is projected to decrease 4.8% during the 20 year period between 2010 and 2030. The most notable finding is the projected increase in people 65 and older (71.4%) over the next 20 years compared to an average Countywide population increase of only 10%.

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

Developing trends influence the need to modify recreation services for County residents. Catawba County and the surrounding counties will continue to increase in popularity as vacation destinations. To meet the needs of residents and visitors, the Parks Division must continually evaluate its recreation services and offer diverse types of recreation opportunities.



Riverbend trail

Approximately, 72,285 citizens, or 46.8%, 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. Catawba County Parks has focused on providing large-scale passive recreation and other unique environmental recreational opportunities that are not offered by the municipalities. This results in more diverse recreational opportunities without redundancy.

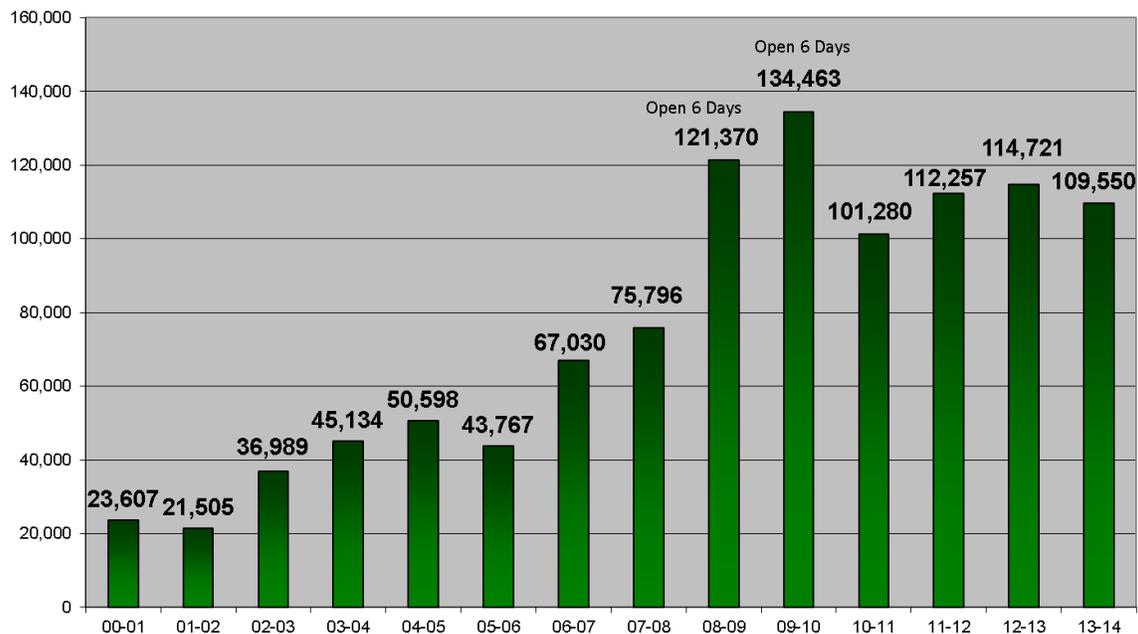


2.5 TRENDS IN PARK PATRONAGE

Demand for passive recreation is shown by the increases in attendance as shown below in Chart 2.5.1. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2001/2002 Catawba County Parks served 21,505 patrons. By FY 2004/2005, this number had more than doubled, having had 50,598 visits. The attendance was slightly down in FY 2005/2006 (43,767) due to a number of weather related issues, but attendance increased again in 2006/2007 with 67,030 people visiting. A substantial increase was realized in FY 2008/2009 (121,370) and 2009/2010 (134,463) due to the six-day per week operating schedule. In FY 2010/2011 attendance dropped to 101,280 as the parks resumed the four-day week. Since that time attendance has been increasing FY 2011/2012 (112,257) and 2012/2013 (114,721). A small decline was realized in 2013/2014 showing 109,550 visits due to weather issues. The growth can most likely be attributed to the public’s awareness of the park system, and greater knowledge of the relation between exercise and wellness.

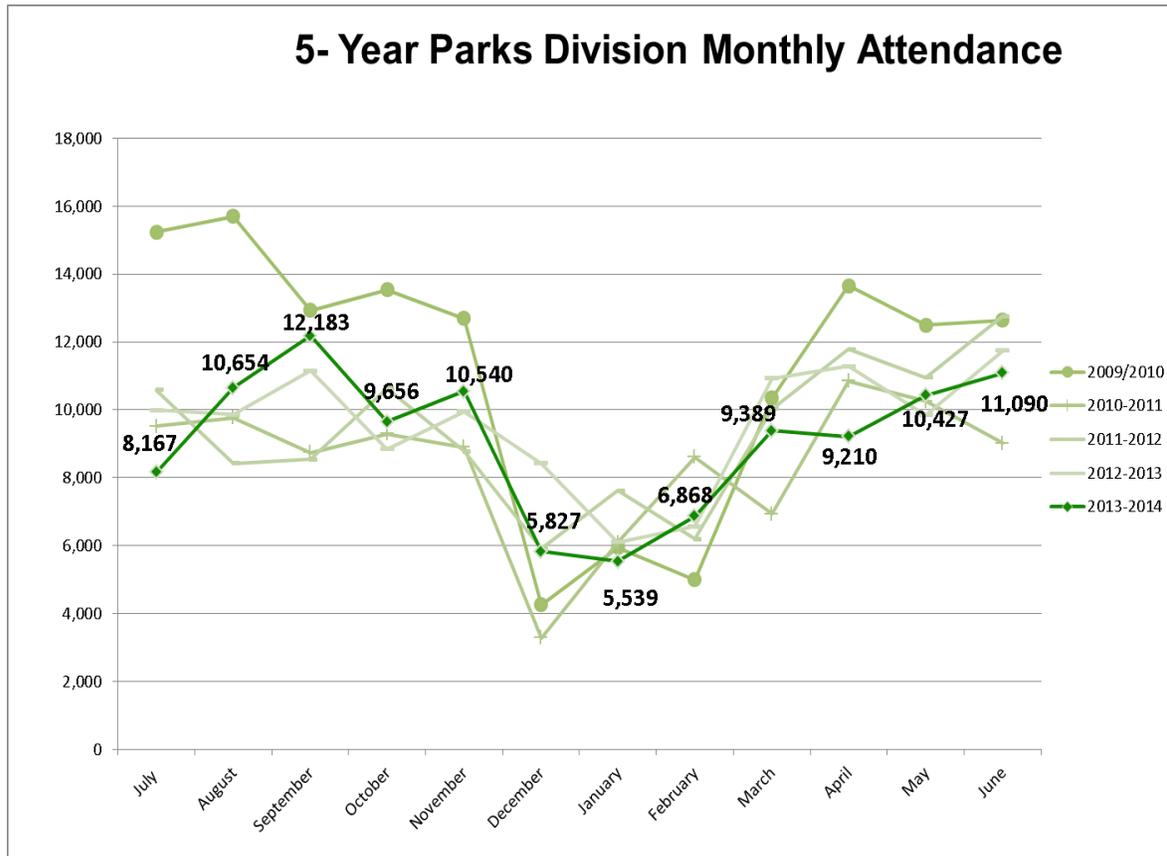
Chart 2.5.1 Attendance by Fiscal Year

Parks Division Attendance 1,058,067 Vistors Since July 4,1999



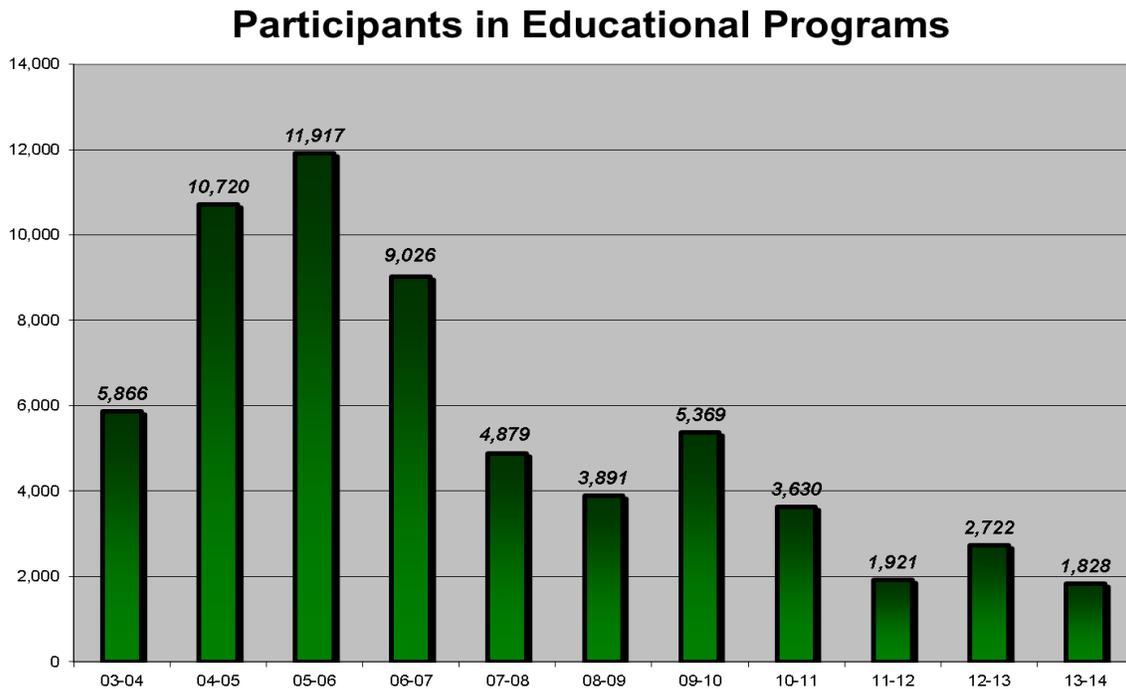
Monthly attendance is seasonal, with lowest patronage from December through February. Chart 2.5.2 below shows monthly system-wide attendance by month.

Chart 2.5.2 Monthly Attendance by Fiscal Year



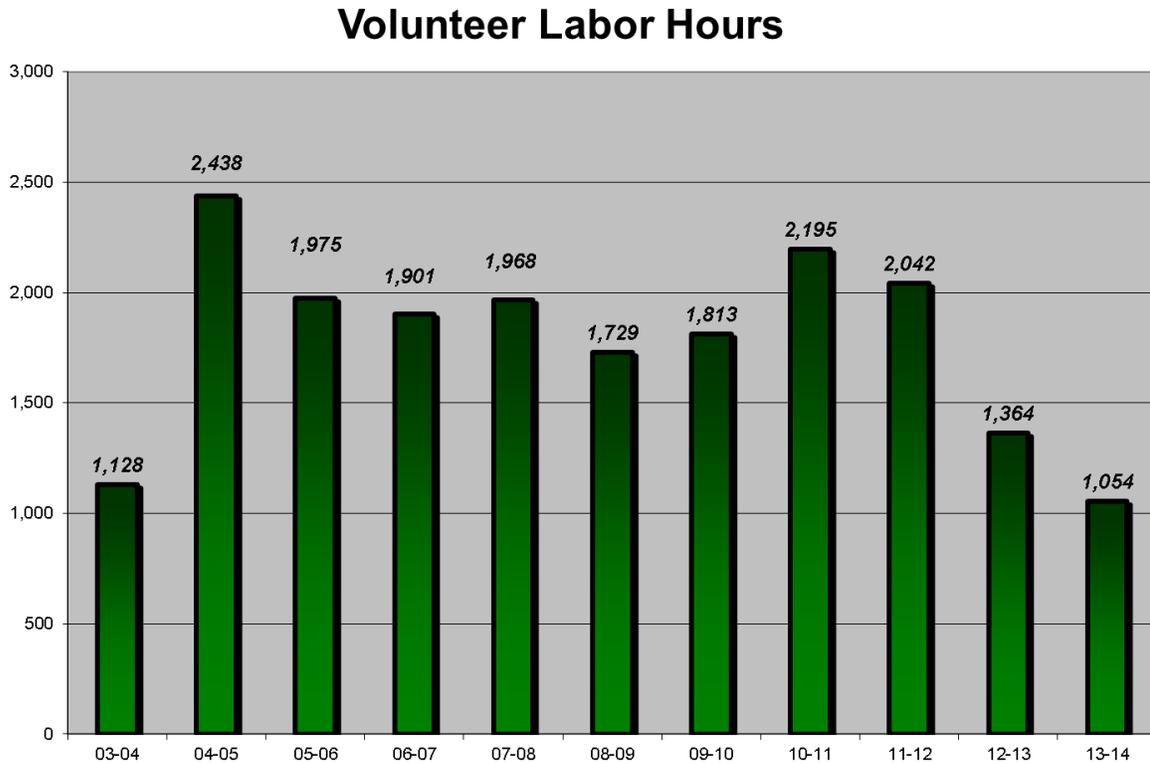
Environmental educational programs are offered to the public and school/civic groups as park staff time allows. Educational Program attendance ranged from 1,828 to 11,917 participants. Fiscal years 2004/2005 through 2006/2007 yielded the greatest number of participants as park rangers gave presentations to school and civic groups.

Chart 2.5.3 Educational Program Participation by Fiscal Year



Volunteers have assisted the parks on many projects. Chart 2.5.4 below shows 1,054 to 2,438 volunteer hours per year. Many of these hours came from Boy Scout projects, and work-study projects through Catawba Valley Community College.

Chart 2.5.4 Volunteer Labor Hours by Fiscal Year



- End of Section -