

# **Attachment 1**

Public Input Session Press Releases  
and Community Flyer

Flyers Distributed to Area Businesses and Non-Profits

# CATAWBA COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN

## PLEASE SHARE YOUR OPINIONS WITH US

### FOUR PUBLIC FORUMS ARE SCHEDULED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY

The map displays Catawba County with four distinct colored regions indicating the locations of public forums. The Highland Recreation Center is in the northwest (green), the Government Center is in the northeast (purple), the Mountain View Southwest Branch Library is in the southwest (orange), and the Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire & Rescue is in the southeast (blue). Major roads like US-75 and US-81 are also shown.

**Highland Recreation Center**  
Community Room  
1451 8<sup>th</sup> Street Drive, NE  
Hickory, NC 28601  
Thursday, February 27, 2014  
4:00pm to 7:00pm

**Catawba County Government Center**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Meeting Room  
100A Southwest Boulevard  
Newton, NC 28658  
Tuesday, February 25, 2014  
4:00pm to 7:00pm

**Mountain View Southwest Branch Library**  
Conference Room  
2944 Highway 127 South  
Hickory, NC 28602  
Tuesday, February 18, 2014  
4:00pm to 7:00pm

**Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire & Rescue**  
4011 Slanting Bridge Road, Sherrills Ford, NC 28673  
Wednesday, March 5, 2014  
4:00pm to 7:00pm

Catawba County

*Participate in one of the four drop-in sessions to have your ideas considered in the Parks Master Plan Update*

Hosted by the Parks Advisory Committee

For more information contact

Catawba County Planner Susan Ballbach at 828-465-8381

**PUBLIC INPUT MEETING SCHEDULED ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
UPDATE TO PARKS MASTER PLAN**

Catawba County has scheduled a “drop in” public meeting for residents to learn the results of four previous meetings and receive survey results regarding the update to the County Parks Master Plan. The public is encouraged to give their input on recommendations for the Plan update.

The meeting will be held from 4:00 until 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 22, 2014, at the Catawba County Government Center at 100-A Southwest Boulevard in Newton. Interested persons are invited to drop by at their convenience during those hours to learn the recommendations proposed for the update.

“County staff is continuing a process of updating the Catawba County Parks Master Plan,” said Susan Ballbach, Senior Planner. “The current Plan was adopted on December 17, 2007, with the intent of updating it in about five years since the parks were relatively new and growing, and new census information would be available after 2010. The update will include consideration of the goals and recommendations identified in the original plan and recognize new concepts suggested by the Parks Steering Committee and the public.”

The County held four public meetings from mid February through early March 2014, at locations across the county. The public was invited to come to the meetings to look at and interact with maps of the County park system and comment on amenities they would like to see at the existing and future parks.

Staff and a Steering Committee have since taken input from the four meetings and survey, and begun drafting the update to the Master Plan. They will be sharing the recommendations proposed for the update at the April 22 public meeting.

The County Parks Advisory Committee, twelve citizens appointed by the Catawba County Board of Commissioners and charged with advising the Board of Commissioners on park goals and objectives, user needs and other issues associated with County Parks, is serving as the Steering Committee for the plan update.

The updated plan will focus on key topics including: population trends and projections, existing plans and documents, existing park facilities, a recreation needs assessment, goals and recommendations, and the development of a final Action Implementation Plan.

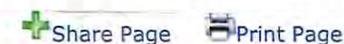
Catawba County’s Parks System currently includes three parks. Baker’s Mountain Park is located in the southwestern part of the county, at the highest elevation point in Catawba County (1780 feet), with 189 acres of mature Chestnut Oak forest and nearly six miles of trails to explore. Riverbend Park is located along the Catawba River off Highway 16 at the Alexander County line and features 450 acres and twelve miles of trails to explore. St. Stephens Park, a nine-acre facility, is located beside Clyde Campbell Elementary School and includes a 1/3 mile hiking trail which runs near picnic areas and leads through a wooded area that makes you feel miles away from a city.

The County also has long-term plans to develop a park on a 589-acre tract of land on Lake Norman, off Little Mountain Road in the southeast part of the county. This land is one of the largest remaining undeveloped tracts on Lake Norman and this park will serve the fastest growing area of Catawba County. The County is also making plans to expand the historic Bunker Hill Covered Bridge and Murrays Mill Parks in partnership with the Catawba County Historical Association.

For more information on the April 22 public meeting or the update of Catawba County’s Parks Master Plan, you may contact the Catawba County Department of Planning, Parks and Development at 828-465-8380 or [sballbach@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:sballbach@catawbacountync.gov).



## Catawba County Website Invitation to Attend One of the Public Forum Input Sessions



[Your County Government](#) | 
 [Online Services](#) | 
 [Community Links](#) | 
 [Services](#)

February 7, 2014

### PUBLIC INPUT MEETINGS SCHEDULED AS CATAWBA COUNTY UPDATES PARKS MASTER PLAN

Catawba County has scheduled a series of public forums to receive the public's input as the County updates its Parks Master Plan.

The forums will begin on Tuesday, February 18, 2014, at the Southwest Branch of the Catawba County Library at 2944 Highway 127 South in Mountain View. Other forums will be held on Tuesday, February 25, 2014, at the Government Center at 100-A Southwest Boulevard in Newton; on Thursday, February 27, 2014, at the Highland Recreation Center at 1451 8th Street Drive in Hickory; and on Wednesday, March 5, 2014, at the Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue Base at 4011 Slanting Bridge Road.

All of the forums will run from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Interested persons are invited to drop in at their convenience during those hours, and look at and interact with maps of the County park system to comment on amenities they would like to see at the existing and future parks.

"County staff will be engaged in a process of updating the Catawba County Parks Master Plan during the current fiscal year," said Susan Ballbach, Senior Planner. "The current Plan was adopted on December 17, 2007, with the intent of updating it in about five years since the parks were relatively new and growing, and new census information would be available after 2010. The update will include consideration of the goals and recommendations identified in the original plan and recognize new concepts suggested by the Parks Steering Committee and the public."

The County Parks Advisory Committee, comprised of twelve citizens appointed by the Catawba County Board of Commissioners, will serve as the Steering Committee for the plan update. The Parks Advisory Committee is charged with advising the Board of Commissioners on park goals and objectives, user needs and other issues associated with Catawba County Parks.

The updated plan will focus on key topics including: population trends and projections, existing plans and documents, existing park facilities, a recreation needs assessment, goals and recommendations, and the development of a final Action Implementation Plan.

Catawba County's Parks System currently includes three parks. Baker's Mountain Park is located in the southwestern part of the county, at the highest elevation point in Catawba County (1780 feet), with 189 acres of mature Chestnut Oak forest and nearly six miles of trails to explore. Riverbend Park is located along the Catawba River off Highway 16 at the Alexander County line and features 450 acres and twelve miles of trails to explore. St. Stephens Park, a nine-acre facility, is located beside Clyde Campbell Elementary School and includes a 1/3 mile hiking trail which runs near picnic areas and leads through a wooded area that makes you feel miles away from a city.

The County also has long-term plans to develop a park on a 589-acre tract of land on Lake Norman, off Little Mountain Road in the southeast part of the county. This land is one of the largest remaining undeveloped tracts on Lake Norman and the park will serve the fastest growing area of





Catawba County. The County is also making plans to expand the historic Bunker Hill Covered Bridge Park in partnership with the Catawba County Historical Association.

Input received at the meetings will be considered by the Parks Advisory Committee and staff as they develop a draft plan in the coming months. Another public forum would then be held, tentatively scheduled for late April 2014, to give the public an opportunity to give input on the draft plan. The Catawba County Board of Commissioners would then schedule a public hearing later this spring and consider the updated Master Plan.

For more information on the public forums or the update of Catawba County's Parks Master Plan, you may contact the Catawba County Department of Planning, Parks and Development at 828-465-8380 or [sballbach@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:sballbach@catawbacountync.gov).



Catawba County E-News

February 13, 2014

## Invitation to Attend One of the Public Forum Input Sessions



## Your input sought as County begins update of Parks Master Plan.

You're invited to drop in at your convenience at any of four forums to look at and interact with maps of the County park system, and comment on amenities you'd like to see at the existing and future parks. [More information, including locations and dates.](#)



February 7, 2014

## PUBLIC INPUT MEETINGS SCHEDULED AS CATAWBA COUNTY UPDATES PARKS MASTER PLAN

Catawba County has scheduled a series of public forums to receive the public's input as the County updates its Parks Master Plan.

The forums will begin on Tuesday, February 18, 2014, at the Southwest Branch of the Catawba County Library at 2944 Highway 127 South in Mountain View. Other forums will be held on Tuesday, February 25, 2014, at the Government Center at 100-A Southwest Boulevard in Newton; on Thursday, February 27, 2014, at the Highland Recreation Center at 1451 8th Street Drive in Hickory; and on Wednesday, March 5, 2014, at the Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue Base at 4011 Slanting Bridge Road.

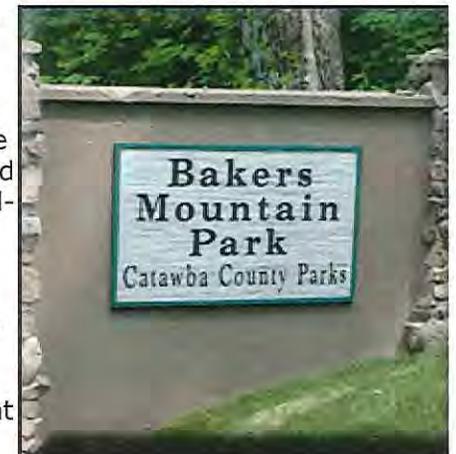
All of the forums will run from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Interested persons are invited to drop in at their convenience during those hours, and look at and interact with maps of the County park system to comment on amenities they would like to see at the existing and future parks.

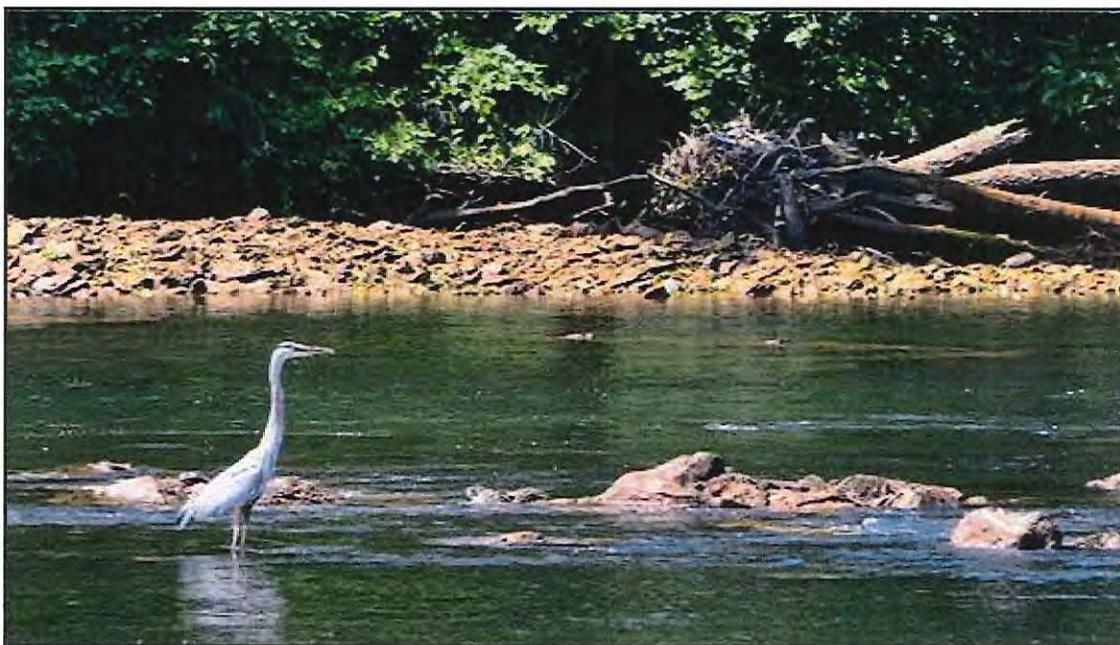
"County staff will be engaged in a process of updating the Catawba County Parks Master Plan during the current fiscal year," said Susan Ballbach, Senior Planner. "The current Plan was adopted on December 17, 2007, with the intent of updating it in about five years since the parks were relatively new and growing, and new census information would be available after 2010. The update will include consideration of the goals and recommendations identified in the original plan and recognize new concepts suggested by the Parks Steering Committee and the public."

The County Parks Advisory Committee, comprised of twelve citizens appointed by the Catawba County Board of Commissioners, will serve as the Steering Committee for the plan update. The Parks Advisory Committee is charged with advising the Board of Commissioners on park goals and objectives, user needs and other issues associated with Catawba County Parks.

The updated plan will focus on key topics including: population trends and projections, existing plans and documents, existing park facilities, a recreation needs assessment, goals and recommendations, and the development of a final Action Implementation Plan.

Catawba County's Parks System currently includes three parks. Baker's Mountain Park is located in the southwestern part of the county, at the highest elevation point in Catawba County (1780 feet), with 189 acres of mature Chestnut Oak forest and nearly six miles of trails to explore. Riverbend Park is located along the Catawba River off Highway 16 at the Alexander County line and features 450 acres and twelve miles of trails to explore. St. Stephens Park, a nine-acre facility, is located beside Clyde Campbell Elementary School and includes a 1/3 mile hiking trail which runs near picnic areas and leads through a wooded area that makes you feel miles away from a city.





The County also has long-term plans to develop a park on a 589-acre tract of land on Lake Norman, off Little Mountain Road in the southeast part of the county. This land is one of the largest remaining undeveloped tracts on Lake Norman and the park will serve the fastest growing area of Catawba County. The County is also making plans to expand the historic Bunker Hill Covered Bridge Park in partnership with the Catawba County Historical Association.

Input received at the meetings will be considered by the Parks Advisory Committee and staff as they develop a draft plan in the coming months. Another public forum would then be held, tentatively scheduled for late April 2014, to give the public an opportunity to give input on the draft plan. The Catawba County Board of Commissioners would then schedule a public hearing later this spring and consider the updated Master Plan.

For more information on the public forums or the update to Catawba County's Parks Master Plan, you may contact the

Catawba County Department of Planning, Parks and Development at 828-465-8380 or [sballbach@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:sballbach@catawbacountync.gov).



# Facebook: Invitation to Attend One of the Public Forum Input Sessions and Take Survey

Catawba County Parks - Newton, NC - Tourist Attraction, Park - Wall | Facebook



Email or Phone  Password

Keep me logged in [Forgot your password?](#)

**CATAWBA COUNTY PARKS**  
Tourist Attraction · Park · Community & Government

Timeline About Photos Likes More ▾

**Catawba County Parks** shared Catawba County, North Carolina's photo. February 7

Three public forums are planned to seek the public's input as the County begins updating its Parks Master Plan.

<http://www.catawbacountync.gov/events/parksplanupdate13.asp>



Like · Comment · Share

3

**Catawba County Parks** shared a link. March 3

We need your input! Please take a moment to complete a survey and give input on the parks for the Catawba County Parks Master Plan update... Your input is crucial for us to plan for the future and will help us to meet your recreation needs... Thanks for your participation!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5KN36T5>

**Catawba County Parks 2014 Master Plan Survey**  
[www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

The Catawba County Planning, Parks and Development Department is in the process of updating the Parks Master Plan for Catawba County and would like your input. Please complete this survey no later than March 25, 2014.

Like · Comment · Share

8 3 17 Shares

## Invitation to Attend One of the Public Forum Input Sessions

HICKORY DAILY RECORD ♦ www.hickoryrecord.com

LOCAL

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2014 ♦ 3A

# Catawba County soliciting parks, recreation ideas

From staff reports

NEWTON — Do you think Baker's Mountain is missing a thing or two that would make the place more interesting?

Or if you're convinced the 12 miles of trail at Riverbend Park could be more interactive, the county wants to hear from you.

Catawba County is working on updating its parks and recreation master plan and will hold a series of public forums to get input on what folks want to see at county parks. The County Parks Advisory Committee, which advises county commissioners on parks and recreation, will serve as the steering committee

for the update.

The public meetings will be Feb. 18 at the Southwest Branch of the Catawba County Library, at 2944 N.C. 127 S. in Mountain View. Other forums are Feb. 25 at the Government Center, at 100-A SW Blvd. in Newton; Feb. 27 at the Highland Recreation Center, at 1451 Eighth St. Drive in Hickory; and March 5 at the Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue Base, at 4011 Slanting Bridge Road.

The drop-in meetings are from 4-7 p.m.

The master plan will look at the county's current plan, what exists at each park, a needs assessment and goals, population

projections and recommendations to come up with a final plan, according to information from the county.

At the meetings, each county park — Baker's Mountain Park, Riverbend Park and St. Stephens Park — will have a sheet of possible amenities that county residents would like to see, said Susan Ballbach, senior planner for Catawba County. Examples of possible amenities on the lists are hiking, picnicking, canoe access, disc golf, dog park and community gardens, she said.

In addition to the three parks, the county has long-term plans to develop a park on 589 acres off Little Mountain Road in the

southeast part of the county. The county also plans to expand the historic Bunker Hill Covered Bridge Park in partnership with the Catawba County Historical Association.

A separate public meeting for the park in the Sherrills Ford/Terrell area will be held, Ballbach said.

The county's master plan has to be updated periodically, officials said. The last time it was updated was December 2007. A master plan has to be less than 10 years old for a county to be eligible for state parks and recreation grants, Ballbach said.

And people's idea of what they think is most important in a park

changes, Ballbach said.

Opinions from all residents will be taken seriously, Ballbach said, not just from avid park users.

The plan doesn't include how much money is set aside in the county budget for each park, she said.

A public hearing would be held before county commissioners approve a master plan, say officials.

For information on the public forums or the update of Catawba County's parks master plan, contact the planning, parks and development at 465-8380 or [sballbach@catawba-countync.gov](mailto:sballbach@catawba-countync.gov).

## Catawba County Website Invitation to Take Survey

Official Internet Home of Catawba County, NC Government - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.catawbacountync.gov/

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Google Search Share More >> Sign In

Official Internet Home of Catawba County, NC ... Home Feeds (J) Read Mail Print Page Safety Tools Help Research Messenger

# CATAWBA COUNTY

North Carolina

Search our site:  Google Custom Search

[Share Page](#) [Print Page](#)

**Your County Government** | **Online Services** | **Community Links** | **Services**

### Quick Links

- Bid Notices
- Board of Commissioners
- Community Alert System
- County Calendar
- Departments
- Fee Schedule
- Job Openings
- Kid's Pages
- Online Deed Search
- Online Payments
- Online Permit Center
- Real Estate Maps
- Street Sign Repair
- Subscribe to e-News
- Tax Bill Search
- Who's in Jail

**Catawba County Government**  
Post Office Box 389  
100 A South West Blvd.  
Newton, NC 28658-0389  
Phone: (828) 465-8200  
Fax: (828) 465-8392



**Couldn't attend one of the forums on county parks? Please take our online survey!**

[Groundbreaking](#) [New partnership](#) [Top recyclers](#) [Parks Plan](#) [AED in school](#) [Life, Well Run](#)

### Did You Know?



Catawba County has partnered with Appalachian State University to create a 7381 square foot center for biodiesel research, development and production.

## Catawba County E-Newsletter Invitation to Take Survey

Catawba County E-News

February 27, 2014

Is this email not displaying correctly?

[View it in your browser.](#)



### **Can't attend public forums on County's Parks? Take our online survey!**

Two more forums are planned to receive public input as the County updates its Parks Master Plan (February 27 at the Highland Recreation Center in Hickory and March 5 at the Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue Base on Slanting Bridge Road) but if you can't attend, you're invited to give your opinion through our [online survey](#).

# Catawba County Website Invitation to Forum to View Draft Plan and Comment



Search our site:

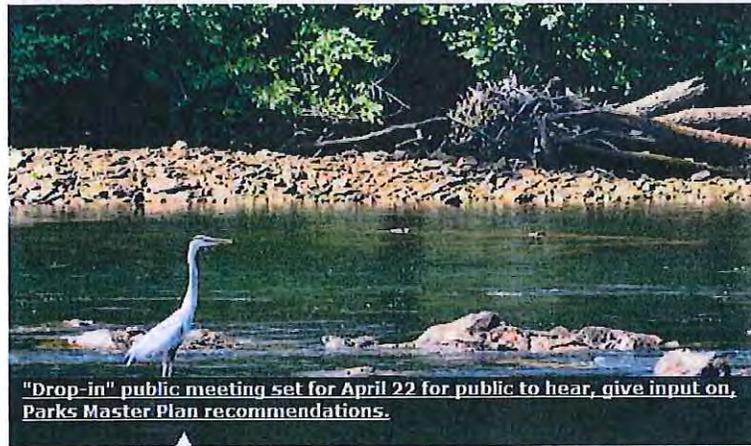
[Share Page](#) [Print Page](#)

[Your County Government](#) [Online Services](#) [Community Links](#) [Services](#)

### Quick Links

- Bid Notices
- Board of Commissioners
- Community Alert System
- County Calendar
- Departments
- Fee Schedule
- Job Openings
- Kid's Pages
- Online Deed Search
- Online Payments
- Online Permit Center
- Real Estate Maps
- Street Sign Repair
- Subscribe to e-News
- Tax Bill Search
- Who's in Jail

**Catawba County Government**  
Post Office Box 389  
100 A South West Blvd.  
Newton, NC 28658-0389  
Phone: (828) 465-8200  
Fax: (828) 465-8392



**"Drop-in" public meeting set for April 22 for public to hear, give input on, Parks Master Plan recommendations.**



### Did You Know?



You can anonymously report information about a crime to the Catawba County Sheriff's Office by filling out a form online.



### In Other News:



Catawba County to partner with Humane Society of Catawba County in operation of new animal shelter opening in near future.... [Read more](#)



Catawba County is again ranked number one in North Carolina in amount of materials recycled, per person.... [Read more](#)




 Search our site:  
[+ Share Page](#) [Print Page](#)
[Your County Government](#) | [Online Services](#) | [Community Links](#) | [Services](#)

April 3, 2014

## **PUBLIC INPUT MEETING SCHEDULED ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UPDATE TO PARKS MASTER PLAN**

Catawba County has scheduled a "drop in" public meeting for residents to learn the results of four previous meetings and a survey regarding an update to the County Parks Master Plan. The public is encouraged to give their input on recommendations for the Plan update.

The meeting will be held from 4:00 until 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 22, 2014, at the Catawba County Government Center at 100-A Southwest Boulevard in Newton. Interested persons are invited to drop by at their convenience during those hours to learn the recommendations proposed for the update.

"County staff is continuing a process of updating the Catawba County Parks Master Plan," said Susan Ballbach, Senior Planner. "The current Plan was adopted on December 17, 2007, with the intent of updating it in about five years since the parks were relatively new and growing, and new census information would be available after 2010. The update will include consideration of the goals and recommendations identified in the original plan and recognize new concepts suggested by the Parks Steering Committee and the public."

The County held four public meetings from mid February through early March 2014, at locations across the county. The public was invited to come to the meetings to look at and interact with maps of the County park system and comment on amenities they would like to see at the existing and future parks.

Staff and a Steering Committee have since taken input from the four meetings and survey, and begun drafting the update to the Master Plan. They will be sharing the recommendations proposed for the update at the April 22 public meeting.

The County Parks Advisory Committee is serving as the Steering Committee for the plan update. The Advisory Committee consists of twelve citizens appointed by the Catawba County Board of Commissioners who are charged with advising the Board of Commissioners on park goals and objectives, user needs and other issues associated with County Parks.

The updated plan will focus on key topics including: population trends and projections, existing plans and documents, existing park facilities, a recreation needs assessment, goals and recommendations, and the development of a final Action Implementation Plan.

Catawba County's Parks System currently includes three parks. Baker's Mountain Park is located in the southwestern part of the county, at the highest elevation point in Catawba County (1780 feet), with 189 acres of mature Chestnut Oak forest and nearly six miles of trails to explore. Riverbend Park is located along the Catawba River off Highway 16 at the Alexander County line and features 450 acres and twelve miles of trails to explore. St. Stephens Park, a nine-acre facility, is located beside Clyde Campbell Elementary School and includes a 1/3 mile hiking trail which runs near picnic areas and leads through a wooded area that makes you feel miles away from a city.

The County also has long-term plans to develop a park on a 589-acre tract of land on Lake Norman, off Little Mountain Road in the southeast part of the county. This land is one of the largest remaining undeveloped tracts on Lake Norman and this park will serve the fastest growing area of Catawba County. The County is also making plans to expand the historic Bunker Hill Covered Bridge and Murrays Mill Parks in partnership with the Catawba County Historical Association.

For more information on the April 22 public meeting or the update of Catawba County's Parks Master Plan, you may contact the Catawba County Department of Planning, Parks and Development at 828-465-8380 or [sballbach@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:sballbach@catawbacountync.gov).

 Share Page  Rate Page  Email Page  Print Page



© 2014, Catawba County Government, North Carolina. All rights reserved.  
Disclaimer - Privacy/Security Notice



## Invitation to Attend One of the Public Forum Input Sessions

HICKORY DAILY RECORD ♦ www.hickoryrecord.com

LOCAL

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2014 ♦ 3A

# Catawba County soliciting parks, recreation ideas

From staff reports.

NEWTON — Do you think Baker's Mountain is missing a thing or two that would make the place more interesting?

Or if you're convinced the 12 miles of trail at Riverbend Park could be more interactive, the county wants to hear from you.

Catawba County is working on updating its parks and recreation master plan and will hold a series of public forums to get input on what folks want to see at county parks. The County Parks Advisory Committee, which advises county commissioners on parks and recreation, will serve as the steering committee

for the update.

The public meetings will be Feb. 18 at the Southwest Branch of the Catawba County Library, at 2944 N.C. 127 S. in Mountain View. Other forums are Feb. 25 at the Government Center, at 100-A SW Blvd. in Newton; Feb. 27 at the Highland Recreation Center, at 1451 Eighth St. Drive in Hickory; and March 5 at the Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue Base, at 4011 Slanting Bridge Road.

The drop-in meetings are from 4-7 p.m.

The master plan will look at the county's current plan, what exists at each park, a needs assessment and goals, population

projections and recommendations to come up with a final plan, according to information from the county.

At the meetings, each county park — Baker's Mountain Park, Riverbend Park and St. Stephens Park — will have a sheet of possible amenities that county residents would like to see, said Susan Ballbach, senior planner for Catawba County. Examples of possible amenities on the lists are hiking, picnicking, canoe access, disc golf, dog park and community gardens, she said.

In addition to the three parks, the county has long-term plans to develop a park on 589 acres off Little Mountain Road in the

southeast part of the county. The county also plans to expand the historic Bunker Hill Covered Bridge Park in partnership with the Catawba County Historical Association.

A separate public meeting for the park in the Sherrills Ford/Terrell area will be held, Ballbach said.

The county's master plan has to be updated periodically, officials said. The last time it was updated was December 2007. A master plan has to be less than 10 years old for a county to be eligible for state parks and recreation grants, Ballbach said.

And people's idea of what they think is most important in a park

changes, Ballbach said.

Opinions from all residents will be taken seriously, Ballbach said, not just from avid park users.

The plan doesn't include how much money is set aside in the county budget for each park, she said.

A public hearing would be held before county commissioners approve a master plan, say officials.

For information on the public forums or the update of Catawba County's parks master plan, contact the planning, parks and development at 465-8380 or sballbach@catawba-countync.gov.

# Catawba County Website Invitation to Take Survey

Official Internet Home of Catawba County, NC Government - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.catawbacountync.gov/

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Google Search Share More >> Sign In

Official Internet Home of Catawba County, NC ... Home Feeds (0) Read Mail Print Page Safety Tools Help Research Messenger

# CATAWBA COUNTY

North Carolina

Search our site:  Search

Share Page Print Page

Your County Government Online Services Community Links Services

### Quick Links

- Bid Notices
- Board of Commissioners
- Community Alert System
- County Calendar
- Departments
- Fee Schedule
- Job Openings
- Kid's Pages
- Online Deed Search
- Online Payments
- Online Permit Center
- Real Estate Maps
- Street Sign Repair
- Subscribe to e-News
- Tax Bill Search
- Who's in Jail

**Catawba County Government**  
Post Office Box 389  
100 A South West Blvd.  
Newton, NC 28658-0389  
Phone: (828) 465-8200  
Fax: (828) 465-8392



Couldn't attend one of the forums on county parks? Please take our online survey!



### Did You Know?

Catawba County has partnered with Appalachian State University to create a 7381 square foot center for biodiesel research, development and production.

Groundbreaking New partnership Top recyclers Parks Plan AED in school Life, Well Run

## Catawba County E-Newsletter Invitation to Take Survey

Catawba County E-News

February 27, 2014

Is this email not displaying correctly?

[View it in your browser.](#)



### Can't attend public forums on County's Parks? Take our online survey!

Two more forums are planned to receive public input as the County updates its Parks Master Plan (February 27 at the Highland Recreation Center in Hickory and March 5 at the Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue Base on Slanting Bridge Road) but if you can't attend, you're invited to give your opinion through our [online survey](#).

# Catawba County Website Invitation to Forum to View Draft Plan and Comment



Search our site:

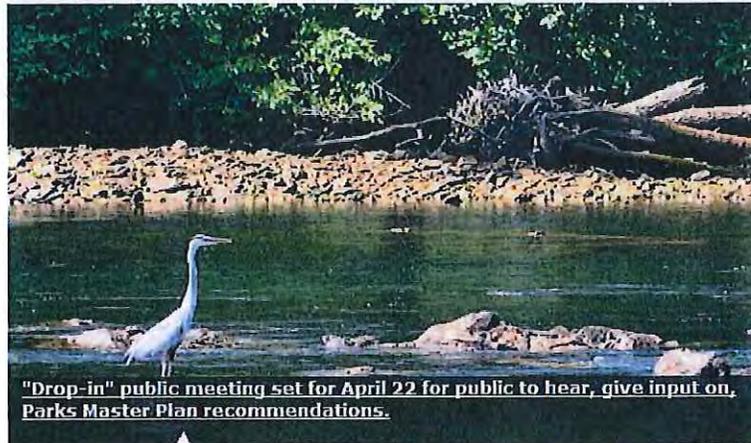
[Share Page](#) [Print Page](#)

[Your County Government](#) [Online Services](#) [Community Links](#) [Services](#)

### Quick Links

- Bid Notices
- Board of Commissioners
- Community Alert System
- County Calendar
- Departments
- Fee Schedule
- Job Openings
- Kid's Pages
- Online Deed Search
- Online Payments
- Online Permit Center
- Real Estate Maps
- Street Sign Repair
- Subscribe to e-News
- Tax Bill Search
- Who's in Jail

**Catawba County Government**  
Post Office Box 389  
100 A South West Blvd.  
Newton, NC 28658-0389  
Phone: (828) 465-8200  
Fax: (828) 465-8392



**"Drop-in" public meeting set for April 22 for public to hear, give input on, Parks Master Plan recommendations.**



### Did You Know?



You can anonymously report information about a crime to the Catawba County Sheriff's Office by filling out a form online.



### In Other News:



Catawba County to partner with Humane Society of Catawba County in operation of new animal shelter opening in near future.... [Read more](#)



Catawba County is again ranked number one in North Carolina in amount of materials recycled, per person.... [Read more](#)




 Search our site:  
[+ Share Page](#) [Print Page](#)
[Your County Government](#) | [Online Services](#) | [Community Links](#) | [Services](#)

April 3, 2014

## **PUBLIC INPUT MEETING SCHEDULED ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UPDATE TO PARKS MASTER PLAN**

Catawba County has scheduled a "drop in" public meeting for residents to learn the results of four previous meetings and a survey regarding an update to the County Parks Master Plan. The public is encouraged to give their input on recommendations for the Plan update.

The meeting will be held from 4:00 until 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 22, 2014, at the Catawba County Government Center at 100-A Southwest Boulevard in Newton. Interested persons are invited to drop by at their convenience during those hours to learn the recommendations proposed for the update.

"County staff is continuing a process of updating the Catawba County Parks Master Plan," said Susan Ballbach, Senior Planner. "The current Plan was adopted on December 17, 2007, with the intent of updating it in about five years since the parks were relatively new and growing, and new census information would be available after 2010. The update will include consideration of the goals and recommendations identified in the original plan and recognize new concepts suggested by the Parks Steering Committee and the public."

The County held four public meetings from mid February through early March 2014, at locations across the county. The public was invited to come to the meetings to look at and interact with maps of the County park system and comment on amenities they would like to see at the existing and future parks.

Staff and a Steering Committee have since taken input from the four meetings and survey, and begun drafting the update to the Master Plan. They will be sharing the recommendations proposed for the update at the April 22 public meeting.

The County Parks Advisory Committee is serving as the Steering Committee for the plan update. The Advisory Committee consists of twelve citizens appointed by the Catawba County Board of Commissioners who are charged with advising the Board of Commissioners on park goals and objectives, user needs and other issues associated with County Parks.

The updated plan will focus on key topics including: population trends and projections, existing plans and documents, existing park facilities, a recreation needs assessment, goals and recommendations, and the development of a final Action Implementation Plan.

Catawba County's Parks System currently includes three parks. Baker's Mountain Park is located in the southwestern part of the county, at the highest elevation point in Catawba County (1780 feet), with 189 acres of mature Chestnut Oak forest and nearly six miles of trails to explore. Riverbend Park is located along the Catawba River off Highway 16 at the Alexander County line and features 450 acres and twelve miles of trails to explore. St. Stephens Park, a nine-acre facility, is located beside Clyde Campbell Elementary School and includes a 1/3 mile hiking trail which runs near picnic areas and leads through a wooded area that makes you feel miles away from a city.

The County also has long-term plans to develop a park on a 589-acre tract of land on Lake Norman, off Little Mountain Road in the southeast part of the county. This land is one of the largest remaining undeveloped tracts on Lake Norman and this park will serve the fastest growing area of Catawba County. The County is also making plans to expand the historic Bunker Hill Covered Bridge and Murrays Mill Parks in partnership with the Catawba County Historical Association.

For more information on the April 22 public meeting or the update of Catawba County's Parks Master Plan, you may contact the Catawba County Department of Planning, Parks and Development at 828-465-8380 or [sballbach@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:sballbach@catawbacountync.gov).

 Share Page  Rate Page  Email Page  Print Page



© 2014, Catawba County Government, North Carolina. All rights reserved.  
Disclaimer - Privacy/Security Notice



## Forum Featuring Draft Plan and Opportunity for More Input

html

Printed from the Charlotte Observer - [www.CharlotteObserver.com](http://www.CharlotteObserver.com)

Posted: Saturday, Apr. 12, 2014

# Learn about the future of county parks at meeting April 22

*PUBLISHED IN: GASTON/CATAWBA NEWS*

**Parks Master Plan:** Learn about proposed updates to Catawba County's Parks Master Plan during a drop-in public meeting from 4-7 p.m. April 22 at the Catawba County Government Center, 100-A Southwest Blvd., Newton. The public is encouraged to share input regarding recommended plan updates.

Catawba County's park system includes three parks: Baker's Mountain Park, Riverbend Park and St. Stephens Park. Catawba County also has long-term plans to develop a park on a 589-acre tract of land on Lake Norman.

For information on the April 22 public meeting or the update of Catawba County's Parks Master Plan, call the Catawba County Department of Planning, Parks and Development at 828-465-8380.



# Residents offer input on county park plans

BY EVAN MATSUMOTO  
ematsumoto@hickoryrecord.com

NEWTON — A one-of-a-kind bridge built in 1895 garnered significant attention Tuesday at the Catawba County parks master plan public input meeting in Newton.

The meeting was the culmination of surveys and public opinions from four previous

public input sessions. Updates to the master plan will be heard in June by the Planning Board before going to the Board of Commissioners for approval in July.

Most people requested Bunker Hill Covered Bridge be developed first, said Susan Ballbach, the senior planner. The bridge was constructed before the turn of the 20th century. Now it's the

only surviving historic covered bridge in North Carolina, according to the National Park Service. And it's the only surviving Haupt truss covered bridge in the country.

Ballbach said more trails and continued maintenance of buildings at parks were common requests. Paved trails were also requested for older and handicapped people, and

people pushing strollers. More requests came for expanded park hours to six days a week instead of the county's current four days.

Other recommendations included partnering with local schools to enhance educational opportunities for students. A few people requested sand volleyball courts at St. Stephens Park, Ballbach said.

Surveys done before Tuesday's meeting showed 69 percent of park use is for outdoor nature experience, 56 percent for wellness and physical fitness, and 34 percent for psychological health and relaxation, Ballbach said.

The current parks plan was adopted by the county in 2007. The county intended to update the plan after the 2010 census.

## Forum Featuring Draft Plan and Opportunity for More Input

# Catawba County Input meeting for parks set

From staff reports

NEWTON — An update to the Catawba County parks master plan will be available Tuesday at an input meeting in Newton.

The county scheduled a "drop in" public meeting for residents to learn the results of four previous county meetings and to receive survey results for the parks plan. The update to the plan is the result of meetings across the county where the public was invited to look at and interact with maps of the county parks system.

Staff members and a steering committee took the input from the four meetings and drafted an update. They will be sharing the proposed recom-

» Meeting: 4-7 p.m.

Tuesday  
Catawba County  
Government Center  
100-A Southwest Blvd.,  
Newton

» For information,  
contact:

Catawba County Department of Planning, Parks and Development  
828-465-8380

mendations Tuesday.

Catawba County parks include Baker's Mountain, Riverbend Park and St. Stephens Park. The three parks total 648 acres and have about 18 miles of hiking trails.

The county also has a long-term plan to develop a park on a 589-acre tract of land on Lake Norman.

# PERSPECTIVE

## Still a chance to make your voice heard

Catawba County just completed a series of forums to receive public input as the County updates its Parks Master Plan. Four forums were held, were well publicized, and I understand they were well attended taking into account the average attendance at this sort of forum.

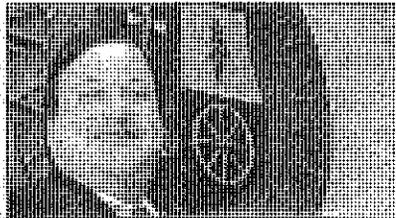
If you knew about the forums and couldn't attend any of them, or if you missed them altogether, you still have an opportunity to voice your opinion on the County parks systems. Your opinion is needed by County officials as they update the Catawba County Parks Master Plan.

We encourage and invite you to please visit [www.surveymonkey.com/s/5KN36T5](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5KN36T5) soon to take the survey. It should take less than five minutes to complete. You may also access the survey through a story at [www.catawba-countync.gov](http://www.catawba-countync.gov).

The current Plan was adopted in late 2007, with the intent of updating it in about five years. The update will include consideration of the goals and recommendations identified in the original plan and recognize new concepts suggested by a Parks Steering Committee and the public.

The County Parks Advisory Committee, comprised of twelve citizens

### From the county seat



Dave Mardin

appointed by the Catawba County Board of Commissioners, will serve as the Steering Committee for the plan update. The updated plan will focus on key topics including: population trends and projections; existing plans and documents; existing park facilities; a recreation needs assessment; goals and recommendations and the development of a final Action Implementation Plan.

Catawba County's Parks System currently includes three parks. Baker's Mountain Park is in the southwestern part of the county, at the highest elevation point in the county (1780 feet). Riverbend Park is located along the Catawba River off Highway 16 at the Alexander County line and features 450 acres and twelve miles of trails to explore. St. Stephens Park, a nine-acre facility, is

located beside Clyde Campbell Elementary School.

The county also has long-term plans to develop a park on a 589-acre tract of land on Lake Norman off Little Mountain Road in the southeast part of the county, and is making plans to expand the historic Bunker Hill Covered Bridge Park in partnership with the Catawba County Historical Association.

Input received from the forums and survey will be considered by the Parks Advisory Committee and staff as they develop a draft plan in the coming months. Another public forum would then be held, tentatively scheduled for late April, to give the public an opportunity to give input on the draft plan. The Board of Commissioners would then schedule a public hearing later this year and consider the updated Master Plan.

For more information on the update of Catawba County's Parks Master Plan, you may contact the Catawba County Department of Planning, Parks and Development at 828-465-8380 or [sballbach@catawba-countync.gov](mailto:sballbach@catawba-countync.gov).

**Dave Mardin is public information officer for Catawba County.**

The Observer News Enterprise welcomes letters to the editor.

Letters to the editor should only be sent to The O-N-E, and not to other publications.

We do not publish open letters or third-party letters.

Letters for publication should be no longer than 350 words, and will be subject to editing.

Letters should generally focus on a recent news issue.

Letters must include the writer's name, address and daytime phone number.

Send a letter to the editor by e-mailing: [onenews@observernewsenterprise.com](mailto:onenews@observernewsenterprise.com).

Although email is strongly preferred and will allow a letter to be processed more quickly, you may also mail your letter to:

Letters to the Editor, The Observer News Enterprise, P.O. Drawer 48, Newton, NC 28658

## **Board of Commissioners to Consider Adoption of Master Plan**

May 11, 2015

### **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO HOLD CONSIDER UPDATE OF COUNTY'S PARKS MASTER PLAN**

The Catawba County Board of Commissioners will receive a report on a proposed update to the County's 2007 Parks Master Plan and a Planning Board recommendation to approve the update at its meeting beginning at 7 p.m. on Monday, May 18, 2015 at the 1924 Courthouse at 30 North College Avenue in Newton.

"The plan was developed by County staff, in consultation with the County's Parks Advisory Committee, over an 18 month period," said Susan Ballbach, County Senior Planner who works closely with the Advisory Committee. "We had more extensive engagement with the public than was possible as we prepared the original plan in 2007, using a series of community meetings and a survey distributed both online and by paper copies. The Committee kept these public comments in mind as they first reviewed existing parks across the county and sites for potential future parks, and then updated the plan with recommendations for changes in park operation and future community and regional parks."

As County staff and the Parks Advisory Committee began work on the update, they held community meetings in February and early March 2014 at the Southwest Branch County Library in Mountain View, the Government Center in Newton, the Highland Recreation Center in Hickory and the Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue Base on Slanting Bridge Road, in the vicinity of a proposed new regional park.

A survey was also developed that was placed online at the County website and heavily advertised, while paper copies of the surveys were distributed throughout the county.

"The survey told us that 70% of those who visit our parks do so to get an outdoor nature experience," Ballbach said. "We also learned that those who took the survey would like to see musical events, wellness and physical fitness sessions and more 'Art In The Park' type events at our parks. Most who responded wanted increased hours of operation for the parks while others suggested enhanced or expanded trails and picnic areas. The locations most often mentioned for development of future parks were the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge, Mountain Creek and Murray's Mill."

The Committee's review of existing parks and possible future park locations included the existing parks: Baker's Mountain (189 acres with trails in a mountain habitat), Riverbend (450 acres including trails, a dog park, and canoe access on the Catawba River) and St. Stephens Parks (9 acres included a dog park and trails).

The proposed Plan update recommends development of a regional park on Mountain Creek on 589 acres obtained by the County since the 2007 Parks Master Plan was adopted. It also recommends smaller "historic parks" near the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge and Murray's Mill.

"The updated Plan draft also recommends that the County's park system return to a six-day a week operating schedule," Ballbach said. "The three existing parks have been open four days a week since the economic downturn of 2008-2009. In support of the recommendation, the Plan lists the economic, environmental, health, educational and tourism benefits of parks.

The updated Plan also includes specific recommendations for improvements to the existing parks including a Community Meeting Room and primitive camping sites at Baker's Mountain Park; paved trails and primitive camping sites at Riverbend Park; and paved trails and a separate dog park for smaller dogs at St. Stephens Park.

The Plan recommends opening a Bunker Hill Covered Bridge historic park and the Mountain Creek Regional Park and components for each. For the Mountain Creek Park, the Plan recommends water related amenities such as swimming areas, boat/canoe/kayak access and fishing; natural surface, paved, and mountain biking trails; picnic tables and shelters, primitive camping, a dog park and equestrian trails. At the Bunker Hill Bridge Park, the Plan proposes paved and natural surface trails; educational programs/guided tours/historical interpretation regarding the historic bridge; a community meeting/education center and interpretative signage; and restrooms, picnic facilities, and an outdoor amphitheater.

The draft plan is currently available for review at [www.catawbacountync.gov/](http://www.catawbacountync.gov/). Questions may also be directed to Susan Ballbach at 828-465-8381 or [sballbach@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:sballbach@catawbacountync.gov).

-30-

CONTACT: SUSAN BALLBACH, SENIOR PLANNER	828-465-8381
DAVE HARDIN, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER	828-465-8464





Search our site:

[Share Page](#) [Print Page](#)

[Your County Government](#) [Online Services](#) [Community Links](#) [Services](#)

May 19, 2015

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ADOPTS UPDATE OF COUNTY'S PARKS MASTER PLAN**

The Catawba County Board of Commissioners adopted an update to the County's 2007 Parks Master Plan at its meeting on May 18, 2015. The Plan provides a guideline for future development, subject to available resources.

"The Plan incorporates significant community input and was developed by County staff, in consultation with the County's Parks Advisory Committee, over an 18 month period," said Susan Ballbach, County Senior Planner who works closely with the Advisory Committee. "We had more extensive engagement with the public than when we prepared the original plan in 2007, using feedback from a series of community meetings and a survey distributed both online and by paper. The Committee kept these public comments in mind as they first reviewed existing parks across the county and sites for potential future parks, and then updated the plan with recommendations for changes in park operations, and future community and regional park development."

"The survey told us that 70% of those who visit our parks do so to get an outdoor nature experience," Ballbach said. "We also learned that those who took the survey would like to see special events, wellness and physical fitness sessions at our parks. Most who responded wanted increased hours of operation for the parks while others suggested enhanced or expanded trails and picnic areas. The locations most often mentioned for development of future parks were the Catawba County Historical Association's Bunker Hill Covered Bridge, Mountain Creek, and Murray's Mill."

The Committee's review included the existing parks: Baker's Mountain (189 acres with trails in a mountain habitat), Riverbend (450 acres including trails, a dog park, and canoe access on the Catawba River) and St. Stephens Parks (9 acres including a dog park and trails).

The proposed Plan recommends development of a regional park on Mountain Creek, a 589-acre site obtained by the County in 2010. It also recommends smaller "historic parks" near the Catawba County Historical Association's Bunker Hill Covered Bridge and Murray's Mill.

"The updated Plan recommends that the County's park system return to a six-day a week operating schedule," Ballbach said. "The three existing parks have been open four days a week since the economic downturn of 2008-2009. In support of the recommendation, the Plan lists the economic, environmental, health, educational and tourism benefits of parks."

The updated Plan also includes specific recommendations for improvements to the existing parks including a Community Meeting Room and primitive camping sites at Baker's Mountain Park; paved trails and primitive camping sites at Riverbend Park; and paved trails and a separate dog park for smaller dogs at St. Stephens Park.

The Plan recommends opening a Bunker Hill Covered Bridge historic park and the Mountain Creek Regional Park and specific amenities for each. For the Mountain Creek Park, the Plan recommends water-related amenities such as boat/canoe/kayak access and fishing; natural surface, paved, and mountain biking trails; picnic tables and shelters, primitive camping, a dog park and equestrian trails. At the Bunker Hill Bridge Park, the Plan proposes paved and natural surface trails; educational programs/guided tours/historical interpretation regarding the historic bridge provided by the Catawba County Historical Association; a community meeting/education center and interpretative signage; and restrooms, picnic facilities and an outdoor amphitheater.

The draft plan is currently available for review online. Questions may also be directed to Susan Ballbach at 828-465-8381 or [sballbach@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:sballbach@catawbacountync.gov).

[Share Page](#) [Rate Page](#) [Email Page](#) [Print Page](#)



© 2015, Catawba County Government, North Carolina. All rights reserved.  
Disclaimer - Privacy/Security Notice



# Master Parks Plan approved

## *Catawba County Commissioners give the go ahead to update outdoor spaces*

BY CIGI SPARKS

O-N-E STAFF REPORTER

"It has been a labor of love - I'll definitely say that much," said Assistant Planning Director Jackey Eubanks at Monday night's Catawba County Commissioner meeting.

The hot topic on the agenda for the night was the Parks Master Plan.

"The Plan incorporates significant community input and was developed by County staff, in consultation with the County's Parks Advisory Committee, over an 18 month period," said County Senior Planner, Susan Ballbach, in a release to the O-N-E. "We had more extensive engagement with the public than when we prepared the original plan in 2007, using feedback from a series of community meetings and a survey distributed both online and by paper. The Committee kept these public comments in mind as they first reviewed existing parks across the county and sites for potential future parks, and then updated the plan with recommendations for changes in park operations, and future community and regional park development."

The Master Park Plan that is being presented is an update to the 2007 Parks Plan.

The plan that was recently proposed to the commissioners varies from the 2007 plan, featuring less data-driven evi-

dence regarding the parks, updated population and demographic data, additions to the parks systems, a formalized advisory board, site revision plans, updated maps, and more input from the public.

Through advertised public input meeting regarding the parks, the county was able to survey park goers to see what their needs are for the outdoor spaces.

Seventy percent of those surveyed said that their main reason for visiting parks is to have an outdoor nature experience, 56 percent said that they visited to exercise, and 34 percent said that they visited to relax.

Other data derived from the surveys revealed that park goers want more events at the parks and that they want longer visiting hours.

The parks plan also calls updates to be made to Baker's Mountain Park, Riverbend Park, and St. Stephens Park.

The proposed Plan recommends development of a regional park on Mountain Creek, a 589-acre site obtained by the County in 2010. It also recommends smaller "historic parks" near the Catawba County Historical Association's Bunker Hill Covered Bridge and Murray's Mill.

"The updated Plan recommends that the County's park system return to a six-day a week operating schedule," Ballbach said. "The three existing parks

have been open four days a week since the economic downturn of 2008-2009. In support of the recommendation, the Plan lists the economic, environmental, health, educational and tourism benefits of parks."

The updated Plan also includes specific recommendations for improvements to the existing parks including a Community Meeting Room and primitive camping sites at Baker's Mountain Park, paved trails and primitive camping sites at Riverbend Park, and paved trails and a separate dog park for smaller dogs at St. Stephens Park.

The Plan recommends opening a Bunker Hill Covered Bridge historic park and the Mountain Creek Regional Park and specific amenities for each. For the Mountain Creek Park, the Plan recommends water-related amenities such as boat/canoe/kayak access and fishing, natural surface, paved, and mountain biking trails, picnic tables and shelters, primitive camping, a dog park and equestrian trails. At the Bunker Hill Bridge Park, the Plan proposes paved and natural surface trails, educational programs/guided tours/historical interpretation regarding the historic bridge provided by the Catawba County Historical Association, a community meeting/education center and interpretative signage, and restrooms, picnic facilities and an outdoor amphithe-

ater.

Overall, the plan recommends that parks be open six days a week, the opening of the historical Bunker Hill Covered Bridge Park and the Mountain Creek Park, the addition of more trails and maintenance of existing trails, expansion of picnic and sitting areas, the addition of interpretive signage, the continuation of proposing and implementing concepts to help the park system provide health and education benefits, promoting events that feature music, arts and fitness, the expansion of partnership with schools, and the addition of a community meeting/educational a Bakers Mountain.

The board unanimously approved the Master Parks Plan for the county.

At Monday's meeting the board also heard a presentation from the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council on their annual plan for Fiscal Year 2016, presented by JCPC staff member Debbie Bradley.

A bid award regarding biofuel site improvements and a presentation regarding a new position for utilities and engineering building services was made by Utilities and Engineering Director Barry Edwards during Monday nights meeting as well.

To review the full agenda of the Monday, May 18, Catawba County Commissioners meeting, visit [www.catawbacountync.gov](http://www.catawbacountync.gov)

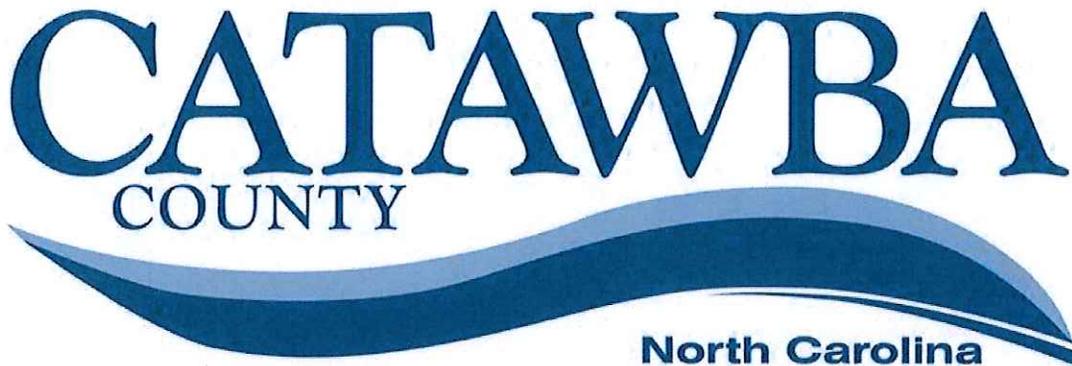
**Susan Ballbach**

---

**From:** Dave Hardin [dave=catawbacountync.gov@mail76.atl51.rsgsv.net] on behalf of Dave Hardin [dave@catawbacountync.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 22, 2015 2:39 PM  
**To:** Susan Ballbach  
**Subject:** Catawba County Spirit, May 2015

Information for and about Catawba County's Employee Family

[View this email in your browser](#)



Volume 22, Number 8

May 2015



[Board of Commissioners adopts update to County Parks Master Plan.](#)

[Learn how to share the road safely and where a truck driver's "No-Zone" is located.](#)



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ADOPTS UPDATE OF COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN

The Catawba County Board of Commissioners adopted an update to the County's 2007 Parks Master Plan at its meeting on May 18. The Plan provides a guideline for future development, subject to available resources.

"The Plan incorporates significant community input and was developed by County staff, in consultation with the County's Parks Advisory Committee, over an 18 month period," said Susan Ballbach, County Senior Planner who works closely with the Advisory Committee. "We had more extensive engagement with the public than when we prepared the original plan in 2007, using feedback from a series of community meetings and a survey distributed both online and by paper. The Committee kept these public comments in mind as they first reviewed existing parks across the county and sites for potential future parks, and then updated the plan with recommendations for changes in park operations, and future community and regional park development."

"The survey told us that 70% of those who visit our parks do so to get an outdoor nature experience," Ballbach said. "We also learned that those who took the survey would like to see special events, wellness and physical fitness sessions at our parks. Most who responded wanted increased hours of operation for the parks while others suggested enhanced or expanded trails and picnic areas. The locations most often mentioned for development of future parks were the Catawba County Historical Association's Bunker Hill Covered Bridge, Mountain Creek, and Murray's Mill."

The Committee's review included the existing parks: Baker's Mountain (189 acres with trails in a mountain habitat), Riverbend (450 acres including trails, a dog park, and canoe access on the Catawba River) and St. Stephens Parks (9 acres including a dog park and trails).

The proposed Plan recommends development of a regional park on Mountain Creek, a 589-acre site obtained by the County in 2010.

"The updated Plan recommends that the County's park system return to a six-day a week operating schedule," Ballbach said. "The three existing parks have been open four days a week since the economic downturn of 2008-2009. In support of the recommendation, the Plan lists the economic, environmental, health, educational and tourism benefits of parks."

The updated Plan also includes specific recommendations for improvements to the existing parks including a Community Meeting Room and primitive camping sites at Baker's Mountain Park; paved trails and primitive camping sites at Riverbend Park; and paved trails and a separate dog park for smaller dogs at St. Stephens Park.

The Plan recommends opening a Bunker Hill Covered Bridge historic park and the Mountain Creek Regional Park and specific amenities for each. For the Mountain Creek Park, the Plan recommends water-related amenities such as boat/canoe/kayak access and fishing; natural surface, paved, and mountain biking trails; picnic tables and shelters, primitive camping, a dog park and equestrian trails. At the Bunker Hill Bridge Park, the Plan proposes paved and natural surface trails; educational programs/guided tours/historical interpretation regarding the historic bridge provided by the Catawba County Historical Association; a community meeting/education center and interpretative signage; and restrooms, picnic facilities and an outdoor amphitheater.

The plan is [available for review online](#). Questions may also be directed to Susan Ballbach at 828-465-8381 or [sballbach@catawbacountync.gov](mailto:sballbach@catawbacountync.gov).