



RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Approved on May 30, 2023

FY 2023-2024

Town of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina Recreation Plan

Chapter 1. Overview.

1.1 Introduction. The purpose of the Kitty Hawk Recreation Plan is to:

- a. Establish a recreation policy.
- b. Provide citizens and elected officials with a comprehensive report of currently available recreational facilities and programs.
- c. Recommend future recreational goals to the Kitty Hawk Town Council for consideration in future Capital Improvement Plans and budget deliberations.

1.2 Recreation Policy. The town of Kitty Hawk will provide a variety of recreational programs and facilities for the town's citizens and visitors, consistent with the Kitty Hawk North Carolina Core Land Use Plan (Reference a), and enabled by grant funding, self-sustaining activities and cost-sharing initiatives with neighboring towns, Dare County and the state of North Carolina.

1.3 Scope.

- a. Although the focus for recreation planning and activities is to enhance the quality of life for Kitty Hawk citizens, recreational facilities and programs are likely to be enjoyed by everyone, including the town's visitors. New facilities and programs will reinforce the town's image as a family-oriented coastal community, consistent with the basic principles outlined in Reference a.
- b. This plan is not approved for implementation. The Recreation Committee prepared and will maintain the Recreation Master Plan in an advisory role to the Kitty Hawk Town Council. The plan is intended to inform the budget and capital improvements planning process and does not represent a needs statement for recreation in the Town of Kitty Hawk. The inclusion of specific recreation programs or enhancements in this plan does not imply approval by the Town Council, nor does it represent a recreation requirement to be fulfilled by future Council action.

1.4 References.

- a. North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Plan (2020-2025).
- b. Kitty Hawk Woods Reserve Management, November 28, 1998 (as amended)
- c. Kitty Hawk Town Code adopted May 4, 2009 (as amended).
- d. Kitty Hawk Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) Core Land Use Plan Update 2003-2004 (as amended)

1.5 Recreation Planning Standards. The North Carolina Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (Reference c), provides basic information for determining the adequacy of existing parks and recreation resources, and identifying the need for additional resources. The plan also presents information on statewide access to recreational opportunities, and ranks counties based on population and available acres of recreation opportunities and facilities. Based on these standards, Kitty Hawk, as a municipality in Dare County, achieves high ranks among counties and municipalities in the State. The contents of this plan are based on citizen input and surveys presenting ideas and possibilities for additional “nice to have” recreational amenities. According to state standards, the recreation needs of the town are met by recreation opportunities within the county.

1.5.1 Dare County Ranking. Dare County achieved above average rankings among all counties in North Carolina for the current supply of recreation resources. The best ranking is achieved by having the fewest number of residents per acreage or facility. Areas ranked were athletic fields, athletic courts, picnic shelters, playgrounds, trails, and local parks. It should be noted that Dare County ranked 2ND for playgrounds, 13th in trail miles, and 6th highest in the supply and availability of local parks. Kitty Hawk residents have ready access to available county facilities.

1.5.2 North Carolina Citizen Recreation Preferences. In 2014 the Division of Parks and Recreation conducted a survey and received responses from 17,535 residents. The questionnaire asked North Carolinians about their preferences for outdoor recreation activities as well as their priorities for parks and recreation in the future. The most popular recreation activities were visiting a lake or beach (69%), walking for pleasure or exercise (61%), visiting parks and historical sites (60%), hiking trails (59%), and freshwater fishing (58%). Other activities favored are readily available include viewing scenery, freshwater boat fishing, nature viewing and all types of swimming.

1.5.3 North Carolina Survey of types of facilities currently needed. In determining the need for future facilities, the state survey asked respondents to identify the activities that they would have participated in more frequently if good programs and facilities had been available. They were then asked to identify areas that the state should improve and rank the five most important. The resulting demand provides a guide for future public recreational funding. The highest future demand for facilities is, in priority order: Unpaved trails, Picnic Shelters, Wildlife observation sites, paved trails and multi-use fields.

1.5.4 Applicability of State Standards to Kitty Hawk Recreation Planning. The comprehensive survey conducted by the state provides a context in which to evaluate local plans. Kitty Hawk’s survey results for citizen preferences for future recreational resources track closely with the North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Plan (current version). Within Kitty Hawk and Dare County borders, all of the highest priority preferences for recreation in the state survey are available to Kitty Hawk citizens. For example, the town’s continued efforts to connect and increase the availability of multi-use paths is also a high priority as identified in the state survey.

1.6 Kitty Hawk Recreation Committee

1.6.1 Introduction. Citizen volunteers on the Kitty Hawk Recreation Committee interact with the Town Council to address recreation matters for the town. This chapter provides information on the committee's organization and responsibilities and describes Kitty Hawk recreation facilities and activities.

1.6.2 Organization. The Recreation Committee advises the Town Council on recreation-related matters within the Town. It is comprised of five members, all of whom are residents appointed by the Town Council. The committee normally meets quarterly or as needed, and meetings are open to the public, with time and place advertised in compliance with North Carolina open meetings laws. The committee's mission is to:

- a. Develop a recreation policy for town council approval within the parameters of G.S. § 160A-353.
- b. Serve as a liaison between the town council and the citizens to ascertain their desires for recreational facilities, their type and location.
- c. Make recommendations for the establishment of a recreation program for the townspeople that will be commensurate with the area, the available funds and the desires of the citizenry.
- d. Identify areas for possible use as parks, playgrounds, pedestrian and bicycle trails, water areas and other recreational uses, and recommend improvements to these areas for such use.
- e. Advise on other recreational activities as requested by the town council. (Town Code, Sec. 13-21)

Chapter 2. Current Recreational Facilities & Activities

2.1 Existing Facilities. The following recreational facilities are provided and maintained by the town. Appendix A contains maps and exhibits, and statistics related to each facility. Appendix A, Exhibit 1 is a map of the town.

2.1.1 Parks & Reserve



Paul Pruitt Park on The Woods Road

- a. **Paul Pruitt Park**
The Town of Kitty Hawk operates a public park on The Woods Road, which is open year-round until dark. The park has play equipment for young children, a picnic area, a portable restroom, and parking, which is also available to users of the adjoining Paul Pruitt Multi Use Path. (Appendix A, Exhibit 2).

b. Sandy Run Park

This public park is located at 4343 The Woods Road. This park offers public access to the Kitty Hawk Woods maritime forest as well as a half basketball court, small playground area, and picnic areas with grills. A bridge connects to a half-mile nature walk loop over Sandy Run. The nature walk features two gazebos and pedestrian and canoe/kayak access, a nature observation tower, a fishing pier, picnic tables, benches and interpretive signage.



Nature Walk at Sandy Run Park, located at 4343 The Woods Rd.

c. Dare County's Kitty Hawk Park

This park run by Dare County is located at 900 W. Kitty Hawk Road. It features a state-of-the-art Skate Park as well as a Dog Park. There is also a playground, half-mile walking trail, the entrance to the Birch Lane 1.8-mile trail, picnic pavilion and restroom facilities. In 2013 a Community Garden was started by volunteers. Plots are open to any Dare County resident and are on a first come first served basis.



Dare County's Kitty Hawk Park, located at 900 W. Kitty Hawk Rd.

d. Monument to a Century of Flight

Set against the open sky of Kitty Hawk on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, where flight began, the Monument to a Century of Flight provides a reflective and contemplative environment. It is surrounded by the simple beauty of the barrier island's natural vegetation and looks out toward the waters of the Atlantic. The site is on state-owned land adjoining the Aycock Brown Welcome Center, near Milepost 1 on US-158. The Monument is maintained as a public park, open and accessible to all without an admission charge.



Monument to a Century of Flight, Milepost 1 on US 158 in Kitty Hawk

2.1.2 Multi-Use Paths, Bicycle Lanes and Trails. The town's multi-use paths, and trails are open to all manners of non-motorized pedestrian traffic. Along with this multi-use path are bike lanes on the sides of roads that are wide enough for bicycle traffic. See Appendix A, Exhibit 1.

- a. The Paul Pruitt Multi-Use Path adjoins the public park and stretches the length of The Woods Road. From the Woods Road, the path extends along US-158 to the Shoreside Shopping Center (Wal*Mart). Across US 158 from The Woods Road, a path extends into Southern Shores and Martin's Point.
- b. The Wright Brothers Multi-Use Path is located adjacent to Moore Shore Road, from Windgrass Circle to Beacon Drive.
- c. Kitty Hawk Village Multi-Use Path, from the Woods Road via Twiford Road to West Kitty Hawk Road, and on to Ivy Lane.

- d. Bicycle Routes:
 - i. North Virginia Dare Trail between the town limits.
 - ii. West Kitty Hawk Road from US 158 to The Woods Road.

- e. Nature Trails on Kitty Hawk Reserve:
 - i. Trail head at the end of Ridge Road
 - ii. Trail head at the end of Amadas Avenue
 - iii. Trail head located at the end of Birch Lane
 - iv. Trail head located at Dare Counties Kitty Hawk Park

2.1.3 Sidewalks (See Appendix A, Exhibit 3):

- a. Eckner Street from east side of US 158 to Tamarack Street
- b. Lindbergh Avenue, from Luke Street south to Hawks Street.
- c. East Kitty Hawk Road, from the east side of US 158 to the west side of NC-12.

2.1.4 Ocean Beach Accesses. See Appendix A, Exhibit 1. Ocean rescue schedules are available on the Kitty Hawk website at www.kittyhawknc.gov.

- a. The Kitty Hawk Bathhouse located on the west side of North Virginia Dare Trail (NC-12) provides parking, restrooms, and outdoor shower facilities. A lifeguard stand is across the street on the oceanfront, manned by ocean rescue personnel from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day.
- b. The Byrd Street Beach Access, with a parking lot at the corner of Lindbergh Ave. and Byrd Street, has outdoor showers, portable toilets; a handicapped accessible oceanfront deck and a lifeguard stand manned by ocean rescue personnel from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day.
- c. The Eckner Street Beach Access has a lifeguard stand manned by ocean rescue personnel from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day.
- d. The Lillian Street Beach Access, with a parking lot, has an outdoor shower, foot shower and a handicapped accessible deck. There is also a lifeguard stand at this location.
- e. There is also public parking at both Luke and Bleriot streets. Both locations also have a shower and foot wash as well as portable toilets in season.
- f. Other town beach pedestrian accesses are at the east end of some of the town's oceanfront public streets. Roving lifeguards patrolling between the town limits serve these accesses between mid-May and mid-October. Parallel parking is available on streets crossing North Virginia Dare Trail (NC-12). The accesses are located at Fonck, Maynard, Bennett, Wilkins and Balchen Streets.
- g. A wooden public access walkway, donated to the town in 2012, provides pedestrian access to the beach in the middle of the 4400 block of Virginia Dare Trail. There is no public parking available at this location.

- h. A wooden walkway provides beach access at the termination of the crosswalk at the southeastern intersection of Kitty Hawk Road and Virginia Dare Trail. Parking is available in the public right of way on the north side of East Kitty Hawk Road.
- i. A beach wheelchair is available to people whose physical condition prevents access to the beach on foot. The chair may be reserved in advance, or picked up at any time on an “as available” basis by contacting the Kitty Hawk Fire Department at 252-261-2666.

2.1.5 Sound Accesses.

- a. The Dare County Bob Perry Road Boat Ramp includes a small boat launch (all types), bike rack, portable restrooms, park grills, a picnic area, kayak floating launch platform and parking.
- b. Windgrass Circle provides parking, a deck, bike rack and access to the Wright Brothers multi-use path.

2.1.6 Other Town Owned Property.

- a. Sandy Run Park (Harris Tract), 4343 The Woods Road.
- b. Town Hall Complex, 101 Veterans Memorial Drive
- c. Moore Shore Road Sound side access Smith Tract
- d. 600 feet of non-contiguous ocean beachfront property, south of Lillian Street.

2.1.7 Other Public Property.

- a. State Property: Kitty Hawk Woods Nature Reserve, Roanoke Island Commission Tract (Foot of Wright Memorial Bridge), land at the Monument to a Century of Flight located adjacent to the Aycock Brown Welcome Center, 5230 North Croatan Highway.
- b. County. Bob Perry Boat Ramp.
- c. 900 West Kitty Hawk Road, site of Dare County’s Kitty Hawk Park

2.2 Recreational Activities. Kitty Hawk’s ocean beaches, the waters of Currituck Sound and Kitty Hawk Bay, and the town’s historic significance as the location of the first flight, provide citizens with a multitude of recreation opportunities unheard of in most communities. The town takes these resources into account when deciding to apply taxpayer dollars and personnel to town-sponsored activities.

2.2.1 Beach Recreation. Recreation activities on Kitty Hawk’s public beaches are self-directed and equipped. They include but are not limited to the following:

- a. **Active -- Physical Activity.**
 - i. Swimming
 - ii. Surfing (surfboards must be on a leash)
 - iii. Fishing (State License required)
 - iv. Skim Boarding
 - v. Body Boarding

- vi. Boating (launching allowed for sailboats, ocean kayaks, small non-motorized craft)
- vii. Snorkeling
- viii. Scuba Diving
- ix. Sail Boarding
- x. Walking/Running
- xi. Shell Gathering
- xii. Volleyball
- xiii. Cornhole
- xiv. Horseshoes
- xv. Frisbee/ball games
- xvi. Playing in the sand
- xvii. Sand Sculpture
- xviii. Playing with dogs (see Reference b, Town Code for conditions and tourist season restrictions and schedules).

b. Beach Activities (Passive – Mental Pursuits).

- i. Sunbathing/Relaxing
- ii. Reading
- iii. Sketching
- iv. Bird/Shore Life/Marine Life Watching
- v. Star Gazing
- vi. Card Playing
- vii. Photography
- viii. Conversation

- c. Prohibited Activities.** Prohibited activities include launching motorized craft, overnight camping, campfires/bonfires, setting off illegal fireworks (See North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 14, Article 54), any activity endangering or purposely annoying the public and criminal behavior.

2.2.1 Sound Waters Recreation. Recreation activities in the waters of the sound are varied, self-directed, and include but are not limited to the following.

- a. Fishing/Crabbing
- b. Boating (all types)
- c. Water Skiing
- d. Swimming
- e. Hunting (in season)
- f. Wind/kite surfing

2.2.2 Horseback Riding. Horseback riding is a cherished Kitty Hawk tradition. Horses owned and registered by residents may be ridden west of US 158 and on the beach, in accordance with the conditions and schedules set forth in Section 4.7 of the Kitty Hawk Town Code (Reference b). No commercial horseback riding is permitted. The following town beach access locations are

designated as horse and rider access points for the purpose of going to and departing from the ocean beach while riding a horse.

- a. Eckner Street.
- b. East Kitty Hawk Road.
- c. Byrd Street.

2.2.3 Organized Recreational Activities. Opportunities for organized recreational activities abound for Kitty Hawk citizens. Federal and state parks and wildlife refuges offer enrichment programs for all ages. The College of the Albemarle, Dare County campus, offers lessons in golf, kayaking, art, crafts and other recreational activities. The college also offers enrichment programs in language, literature, and travel. Dare County provides youth educational programs, sports, physical activity, and arts and crafts. The county has an active senior center, hosting a variety of physically and mentally challenging programs. Nearby towns have fireworks displays in summer months, festivals and parades. The town and county provide a venue rich in stimulating cultural opportunities, such as traditional music, photography, crafts, theater, and mentoring.

Chapter 3. Future Recreation Goals.

3.1 Introduction. The Recreation Committee has developed short (3-6 months), mid (6-18 months) and long-term (18+ months) goals related to recreation planning and desired facilities, activities, and special events. The list takes into account members' ideas and input received from citizen surveys, public input workshops and suggestion boxes placed in various locations in town and at special events. These goals are intended to provide recreation input to Town Council budget and Capital Improvements deliberations.

3.1.1 Recreation Planning Process.

a. Short-Term

- i. Include recreation goals in the town's budgeting process.
- ii. Present Recreation Committee recommendations for recreation enhancements to Town Council at Capital Improvements Plan and budget workshops.
- iii. Review Chapter 24 of Kitty Hawk Town Code (Recreation), as needed.

b. Mid-Term

- i. Update the Recreation Master Plan
 - a. Review, edit and prioritize recommended recreation enhancements.
- ii. Finalize and publish Recreation Master Plan.

c. Long-Term

- i. Participate in Kit Hawk CAMA land Use Plan Update
- ii. Develop methodology for increasing public input for recreation.

3.1.2 Recreation Facilities.

a. Short-Term

- i. Advise on maintaining existing recreational facilities in good operating order.
- ii. Participate in planning for continued improvements for Sandy Run Park.
- iii. Birch Lane Loop-Phase II
- iv. Birch Lane Connection to Sandy Run Park Phase II
- v. Pump Track
- vi. Kitty Hawk Town Hall Multi-Use Trail

b. Mid-Term:

- i. Develop multi-use path priorities for NCDOT Enhancement Grants for the long term and recommend these to Council for staff preparation of yearly grant proposals.
- ii. Install bicycle racks in the public right of way at corners of cross streets public beach accesses between NC-12 and US-158.
- iii. Develop a recommended town-wide multi-use path plan, with links to Southern Shores, Martin's Point and Kill Devil Hills, and incorporate into Outer Banks Transportation Task Force Regional Pathway Plan.
- iv. Recommend locations for small neighborhood parks.
- v. Participate with the state/Coastal Reserve in development of nature trails for Kitty Hawk Woods.
- vi. Develop a multi-use path from The Woods Road at West Kitty Hawk Road extending along Kitty Hawk Road to NC-12.

c. Long-term:

- i. Continue Sandy Run Park monitoring/planning/improvements.
- ii. Develop a multi-use path along the west side of NC-12.
- iii. Obtain Council support for a large Town Common, at Town Hall or another location, capable of hosting community events.
- iv. Recommend equipment for neighborhood parks.
 - v. Coordinate with North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for construction of connecting bike paths from Windgrass Circle to the boundary with Kill Devil Hills on Bay Drive.
- vi. Support NCDOT construction of a sidewalk on the West side of US 158 from Cypress Knee Lane to Jejac Street.

3.1.3 Recreation Activities Goals:

a. Short-term

- i. Create recreational activities with the Town of Kitty Hawk.
- ii. Identify state and county programs with potential for Kitty Hawk venue and obtain Council support for use of town facilities.

b. Mid-Term

- i. Implement use of Kitty Hawk venue for existing educational/recreation programs.
- ii. Investigate educational program for Kitty Hawk Woods.

- iii. Continue to coordinate with state for “Friends of Kitty Hawk Woods” volunteer group.

c. Long-Term

- i. Explore the possibility of town cooperative ventures for recreation activities in Kitty Hawk.

3.1.4 Special Events Goals.

- a. Explore the possibility of special events.

Chapter 4. Public Input

4.1 Introduction. The Recreation Committee seeks maximum public involvement in day-to-day recreation matters, and planning for future recreation needs. Methodologies for obtaining public input and feedback are essential to an effective recreation program.

4.2 Means for Public Involvement. The Kitty Hawk Recreation Committee offers many opportunities for public involvement.

- a. Recreation Committee meetings are advertised and open to the public.
- b. Agenda for Recreation Committee meetings includes a public comment session.
- c. The Town of Kitty Hawk survey of residents and property owners included recreation items, and citizen responses will be input to future recreation committee deliberations.
- d. Facilitated public input sessions for recreation planning.

4.3 Public Involvement Goals.

a. Short term:

- i. Increase awareness of recreational opportunities.

Objectives:

- a. Use the Town and County’s web site to promote recreational opportunities in the Town of Kitty Hawk.
- b. Use the Towns Newsletter and social media.
- c. Incorporate a review of citizen survey input into recreation committee agenda or workshops.
- d. Participate in Planning Board’s Land Use Plan Update public meetings, to gather public comments on recreation zoning and goals.

b. Mid-term.

- i. Develop a methodology for yearly update of the recreation plan, timed to coincide with budget and capital improvement plan workshops and deliberations, to receive public input on recreation initiatives in context with competing priorities.

c. Long-term.

- i. Include a section asking for prioritization of recreation initiatives in the next town survey.

Chapter 5. Recreation Plan Update.

5.1 Introduction. The Recreation Plan must be a living document, relevant to the town's goals, and consistent with citizens' views. A process for maintaining the plan must be developed and institutionalized to ensure current and future recreation planning effectiveness.

5.2 Update Methodology. The Recreation Plan update should coincide with the Capital Improvement Plan and budget processes, which begin in January of the year of budget adoption and culminates with Town Council adoption of the yearly budget no later than the first Monday in June each year.

January:

- a. Review plan for required updates.
- b. Refine goals and objectives.
 - i. Change categories as required (short, mid, long term)
 - ii. Identify new goals/objectives.
 - iii. Delete completed or infeasible items.
 - iv. Assign committee member to incorporate updates prior to next meeting.
 - v. Identify priorities for budget workshop input.
 - vi. Provide input for budget workshops to Town Council Liaison.
- c. Review updated plan.
- d. Incorporate input from budget workshop Goals, Objectives, and Policies.
- e. Develop Recreation Committee work plan.
- f. Offer recommended recreation budget items to planning board/Town Council liaison for coordination.
- g. Submit work plans to Town Manager

March:

- a. Committee chairmen attend council/public budget workshops and present recreation items, if required.

May:

- a. Committee chairman attend council/public budget workshops and present recreation items to council if required.
- b. Incorporate feedback on recreation items from budget public meetings/hearings into Recreation Plan.

June:

- a. Publish updated recreation plan, incorporating results of budget negotiations and actions.

Appendix A. Maps and Exhibits.

Exhibit 1. Town Map depicting Beach/Sound Public Accesses, Multi-Use Paths, Sidewalks and Bike Lanes.

Exhibit 2. Dare County GIS Recreation Map