

Agency Organization and Analysis

Authority Overview

The delivery of recreation services in Cherokee County is mainly provided by the Cherokee Recreation and Parks Authority (CRPA). Ancillary providers are the City of Canton, the City of Woodstock and other areas that provide targeted programs, activities and/or facilities. The CRPA is responsible for operating many programs independently from other providers using staff to organize programs and volunteers that assist in team sports. Most programs operated by CRPA are open to all citizens, and no fee differential is offered to non-county residents. No membership fees are charged to participate in programs, and fee waivers are possible with hardship cases.

The Authority was established in 1995 by Georgia House Bill 951 and extended through 2010 by House Bill 932 in 1999. The Authority is made up of five members and includes a member of the Cherokee County Commission. This is an administrative board responsible for hiring a full-time Executive Director. The Authority operates under its own by-laws, and the employees are governed and protected under a personnel policy manual and job-classification system.

The current laws which allow for and govern the authority only guarantee its existence through 2010 at which time the authority would require extension through another given period. Many Parks and Recreation Authority's whose creation was based on a similar platform have since moved to a perpetual timeline, wherein their existence is a guaranteed component of the organizational structure of the governing body. Examples include Gainesville, Georgia where an authority was established in the 1920's in perpetuity to provide parks and recreation services to the community. Additionally, the City Council dedicated a portion of the property tax (up to 1 mil) for funding the operation of the agency. In Dublin-Laurens County, Georgia an authority was established in 1999 when the City of Dublin and Laurens County Parks and Recreation Departments were merged. The authority was established in perpetuity with funding coming equally from the county and the City of Dublin through their general funds.

The Cherokee Recreation and Parks Authority has had ten years of fiscal responsibility and success. Since its inception, the Authority has only been granted a maximum of five-year guaranteed terms for operations. This short time frame is not consistent with long term planning that needs to occur to address the projected population growth rates. The completion of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan will span a ten-year period through 2014. The master plan in conjunction with the voter approved SPLOST which will provide capital funding for park projects through 2012 will both exceed the current authority term scheduled for renewal in 2010. As the primary provider of recreation services for the county, consideration should be given to extending the current authority term a minimum of 10 and preferably 25 years. The extension of the authority over this period would solidify the commitment of the county for parks and recreation and ensure adequate long term planning. As evidenced by SPLOST support, the community is behind a strong parks and recreation system.

Ownership of Facilities

The Authority owns twenty-seven park facilities (four are undeveloped) located throughout the County. The main concentration of parks is currently along or near the I-575 corridor and in Woodstock. The main offices are located in Woodstock.

Organizational Structure

The CRPA has a total of 28 full-time employees who work to provide programs and facilities throughout the County and its cities. During each year, the Authority hires part-time and contract instructors to assist in providing activities. An existing organizational chart is provided in **Figure 4.1**. Also included in the existing organization chart are positions which are currently vacant or are desired future positions by the authority.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the current divisional services provided by the Authority. Later in this section, detailed organizational charts and discussions of issues and recommendations for each division within the CRPA are provided. This current organizational chart documents the three distinct divisions within the Authority.

They are:

- Management and Administrative Services
- Recreation Services
- Parks and Facilities Services

The staff responsible for leading these divisions includes the Director, Recreation Manager, and Superintendent of Parks & Facilities Services.

Overall Organization Structure Assessment

The existing organization provides inconsistencies in nomenclature and management structure from one division to another. The desire for additional superintendent-level positions by the authority would create a more organized structure and would accommodate future staff growth. Currently the Authority appears to need parks maintenance staff and support staff in recreation centers to handle the increased demand for new programs. Current workload in the parks maintenance area is stressed due to lack of sufficient personnel to maintain the parks located throughout the County. The Authority has recently added park land in the Wyngate area and will be developing a 12-acre park in the Waleska area. These land additions will impact services if no maintenance ratio-per-acre standard is in place.

The CRPA needs slight adjustments in resources due to limited staffing and space. The existing recreation center is staffed with a full-time facility manager and full time/part time facility assistants. The activity center and Union Hill Community Center are only staffed when programs are being held in those locations. Additional staff is needed to allow for expanded programming opportunities. With the development of future recreation centers, researchers recommended a full time assistant manager to help program, monitor and manage facilities. This person should have hours that overlap with the center director.

In the following division-by-division discussion, staff needs and organization structure within each division are discussed.

Management and Administrative Division

The Management and Administrative Division is comprised of six staff members, making it the smallest of the three divisions. It serves all other divisions in the administration of the Authority and provides support functions that include:

- Personnel/Human Resources
- Finance and Budgeting
- Marketing
- Planning
- Computer Support
- Registration
- Purchasing
- Policy Administration

Communications both within the Authority and with outside groups is the most critical function of this Division. They interact with the public and have to meet with governments within and adjacent to Cherokee County.

The research shows that internal and external communications appear to be the biggest challenge. The Lose team feels that the largest breakdown is the lack of networking in the computer system. Information appears to stop flowing many times when it has to leave the main office or if the main office needs to be informed.

In order to improve external communications, it is advisable that the director build partnerships and alliances with external agencies and with the corporate community. A recent positive accomplishment was the renewal of the contract with Coca Cola to provide product, advertising and monies for Authority use. The director must have time to foster and build partnerships such as this in the community and to educate the County about the benefits of the Authority from providing recreation programs for children to enhancing the quality of life for citizens to the tournaments and other programs being a revenue generator and an economic incentive for Cherokee County.

The executive director has the skills and abilities to market the Authority but is tied up with many day-to-day operations that could be delegated to another manager within the Authority. The working relationships with affiliated governments are good, but as more projects and programs are needed, the executive director will need to communicate the benefits to the public and have existing internal managers handle the daily operations of each division.

Management and Administrative Division Organization Recommendations

The Management and Administrative Division is charged with many important functions within the Authority, the primary function being the direct link with the Authority and the government of Cherokee County. The executive director serves as this link through building partnerships and educating external groups and individuals about the Authority. Other members of the administrative staff support operations and provide typical office duties.

Marketing Internally or Outsource Marketing? Staff and stakeholders mentioned that the marketing of the Authority needs to be improved. Currently, the Authority has the ability to market programs through a newspaper insert, flyers and web-based information. Staff changes over the past year have allowed for improved marketing of the department. The Support Services Manager position was created to allow for more frequent updating of the website as well as direct development of the brochure. While these changes have improved marketing, the planning team feels that the Authority may not be reaching a large segment of the population in Cherokee County, and more marketing needs to occur to gain users and inform the public on the benefits of the Authority. The website itself must be marketed as the information source.

Marketing and public relations needs to be improved within the CRPA. The current arrangement has limits due to the availability of staff and resources. Marketing efforts are currently completed by the individual supervisors overseeing the programs. This arrangement creates inconsistencies in the overall promotion of programs offered by the department and creates diverse, not unified, images. As new facilities are proposed and developed, marketing these new centers will require a greater investment of marketing time to educate the community about new programs and facilities provided by the Authority.

A marketing section within the Authority is recommended to deal with the need for promoting programs and facilities. The section would solicit sponsorships and ensure consistency in marketing and public relations pieces produced by the CRPA. This section would produce promotional materials, improve the web-based marketing abilities of the Authority and increase the visibility of special events and athletic tournaments in the county.

As an option, the executive director may desire to solicit these services to an outside business that specializes in marketing and promotion. Costs for these services may be borne from a percentage of revenues from special events, dedicated funds from within the operations of the Authority, or a percentage of sponsorship dollars generated from the marketing of programs and activities.

In addition to a marketing and public relations coordinator, an administrative superintendent is recommended to oversee the daily functions of the division. The expansion of the authority in programs, facilities and staff will require greater oversight (by a senior-level position) than can be given on a daily basis by the director or assistant director. The new positions are shown in **Figure 4.2** the proposed administrative division organization chart.

Recreation Division

One of the most active divisions within the Authority is the Recreation Division. The Division is responsible for promoting and offering many activities. This Division operates recreation facilities and serves as the front line of communications with the public. The Division coordinates programs with volunteers and secures partners to expand programming space. The core programs offered by the Division include:

- Youth Sports Programs
- Adult Sports Programs
- Youth Classes
- Adult Classes
- Senior Programs
- Special Events
- Contracted Programs

A majority of instructional programs and youth sports are provided through contract and volunteer personnel. For example, aerobics instruction is taught by a contracted person to teach that activity.

The Division organizes and manages sports programs through its athletics group. This Division provides oversight for youth sports and plans and organizes adult leagues and tournaments. In addition, staff members participate on the youth sports council which was started to provide consistent policies and procedures relative to athletic associations. The council also oversees background checks for all coaches to help ensure the best possible experience for youth participants. Participation on the council is mandatory for all youth associations utilizing CRPA facilities.

The Division currently has five full-time staff, as shown in Figure 4.1. The Division manages many programs at a variety of activity centers in the system; they include:

- Activities Center
- Ball Ground, Calvin Farmer Park
- Ball Ground, City Park
- Ball Ground, Lions Field
- Barnett Park
- Blankets Creek Bike Trails
- Bryan Walker Field
- Buffington Park
- Cline Park
- Dwight Terry Park at Pine Bluff
- Field's Landing Park
- Hobgood Park
- J. J. Biello Park
- Kenny Askew Park
- Lewis Park

- North Canton Park
- Recreation Center/South Annex
- Riverchase Park
- Rubes Creek Park
- Sequoyah Park
- Union Hill Community Center
- Waleska Park

Programs offered by the Authority have wide appeal and, for the most part, are organized and managed quite well. The core focus of programming appears to favor athletics. Many residents would like more program offerings, but due to limited facilities as well as limited staffing and funding, Authority officials have not been able to respond to increased needs in some programs. In recent years, the Authority has attempted to diversify programming opportunities to include, arts and cultural affairs, senior programming and athletic programming for children with special needs.

Programs throughout the system are fee-based, meaning that a program fee is charged to a participant. Fees are standard for all residents of the county, and out-of-county residents also pay the same rate. Currently, the Authority recovers 27% of its expenses through fees and charges.

The operations of the Division are managed by the Recreation Manager. There are two other recreation supervisors in the division as well as an athletic supervisor and recreation secretary.

Recreation staff appears to be taxed with the increasing demand for activities and programs. Currently there are no full-time programmers within the Authority that could assist supervisors with more “hands-on” roles. This would allow supervisors to plan more strategically which activities should be provided, at what locations, and what markets should be targeted by the CRPA.

Recreation Division Organization Recommendations

It appears that there is a need for more indoor recreation and sports facilities throughout the County. Staff and public meeting responses reveal that there is a desire for:

- Community center with aquatic facilities
- Bike/pedestrian trail network
- Regional Park with multiple activities
- Large playgrounds
- Multi-use sports fields

With these facilities identified and the desire and demand established for such complexes, the Authority is advised to develop a staffing plan that will satisfy programming needs and ongoing maintenance demands.

The current management structure appears to be handled well but is not consistent with other divisions in the organization. As newer facilities come online and more

structured programs are developed, more staff will be needed. A Recreation Division Superintendent position should be established; this position will oversee all functions related to recreation programming. This should include oversight of existing recreation centers as well as proposed centers. Under the current CRPA organization, management of the existing recreation center falls under the Parks and Facilities Division Superintendent. The Parks and Facilities Division oversee all scheduling and maintenance of the facility. With the addition of programming staff and a Recreation Division Superintendent, the existing recreation centers and new centers and staff should become a function of the recreation division. This move should be the first step in expanding programs and promoting greater use of the indoor facilities found in the county.

Prior to newer facilities coming online, it is recommended that the Recreation Superintendent do a staffing and maintenance plan for each facility. These models will provide decision-makers with the tools needed to make strategic decisions regarding how facilities should be developed and determine future estimated operations and maintenance costs. This will allow the Authority to develop long-term budgets that are tied to performance and programmatic efforts.

At a minimum, existing and new recreation centers should include a recreation center manager and assistant manager. If the County chooses to incorporate an aquatics center into the recreation center as recommended, additional aquatics staff will be needed. New staff required to operate an aquatics center would include an aquatics supervisor/pool manager, assistant pool manager and lifeguard/contract staff. A recreation supervisor and recreation leader should also be included as part of the overall recreation center staff to ensure a wide diversity of program offerings. Full-time custodial staff should be added to provide daily cleaning and upkeep of the facility.

The building of new sports complexes over the next ten years will increase athletic participation and programs (and, thus, revenue) in Cherokee County. Additional athletic staff will be necessary to help with increased athletic program and tournament responsibilities. The authority should plan to add, at a minimum, a new athletic supervisor and recreation leader position to the division organization. The Proposed Recreation Division Organization Chart (**Figure 4.3**) provides a look at recommended staff additions and alignments.

Parks and Facilities Division

The CRPA maintains 23 developed and 4 undeveloped park facilities on nearly 1,300 acres of land. The parks and facilities division is comprised of 17 staff members including the superintendent. In addition, prison labor is utilized to help with trash collection in the parks. Part-time staff is also utilized during the summer months to help with routine mowing and maintenance.

The Division currently operates out of a central maintenance facility incorporating a combination of roving and stationary crews. Three staff members are dedicated to the maintenance of Hobgood Park. All others are members of roving crews that travel throughout the county maintaining facilities. Crews are set on a five-day mowing cycle

utilizing a mix of 4' and 6' mowers. Youth sports organizations in the community assist the Division with paying for maintenance of fields.

Review of the maintenance budget shown in **Figure 4.4** reveals appropriations have increased since 2002. This coincides with recent park improvements and development. Personnel-related costs for 2004 make up approximately 55% of the budget. This figure is consistent with national averages of 55-60% of overall costs.

Figure 4.4
Parks and Facility Services Budget

	2002	2003	2004
<i>Personnel Costs</i>	\$276,000	\$421,000	\$410,000
<i>Supplies and Maintenance</i>	\$146,000	\$278,000	\$339,000
<i>Total Budget</i>	\$422,000	\$699,000	\$749,000

Source: CRPA

Interviews with maintenance staff revealed that many employees assume a variety of duties in addition to tasks associated with daily mowing and maintenance routines. Several staff members have skilled trade capabilities such as plumbing, electrical and irrigation repair. Although most large electrical and plumbing repairs are contracted to private companies, smaller jobs are handled in house. Other skilled trade duties handled in house include routine maintenance and repairs of equipment including mowers, vehicles and small engine equipment.

Staff indicated that daily work orders are by word-of-mouth and vary from day to day depending on need. This short-sighted, immediate-need assignment system is a reflection of an inadequate number of staff available for projects and of the lack of an annual maintenance scheduling plan. The division is in the process of developing a maintenance plan however, success of this plan will be dependent on staff to adequately maintain the system on a regular schedule. The CRPA is extremely fortunate to have key staff with a variety of skills; however, the need to change responsibilities from day to day creates inconsistencies in the routine maintenance of the system. Additionally, having to divert workers from routine maintenance tasks to emergencies that arise in the field results in daily maintenance responsibilities being put on hold. This system may have worked when the authority was smaller, but as new facilities have been added, it has stressed the Department's ability to maintain all facilities. This problem will be further compounded as the system grows.

The Authority has had recent opportunities to secure land and develop needed new parks and facilities. J. J. Biello Park, for example, has added a variety of active recreation components for personal enjoyment. These facilities have placed some stresses on the system, and a more strategic way of organizing and planning for maintenance as other new parks and facilities are developed should be explored.

Maintenance Formulas for In-house Staffing

One way to assess the adequacy of existing staff and the need for new staff is to establish maintenance ratios for the upkeep of park facilities. Very limited information exists regarding labor ratios for park maintenance activities. In his book, *Municipal*

Benchmarks *Assessing Local Performance and Establishing Community Standards*, David N. Ammons reports that “although every municipality may wish to design its own standards to reflect local preferences and conditions, it need not start from scratch.” He further suggests that the following labor ratio guidelines devised by the NRPA may be useful to a community deciding on its own standards, procedures and resource requirements. The figure below shows formulas for developing labor ratios for specific maintenance actions.

Figure 4.5: Labor Ratios for Selected Parks and Recreation Maintenance Activities

Labor Ratios for Selected Parks and Recreation Maintenance Activities	
Task	Labor Hours
Mowing 1 Acre, Flat Medium Terrain at Medium Speed	
20" walking	2.8 per acre
24" walking	2.2 per acre
30" riding	2.0 per acre
72" (6-foot) riding	0.35 per acre
Bush hog	0.25 per acre
Trim	
Gas powered (weed eater)	1.0 per 1,000 lin. ft.
Planting Grass	
Cut and plant sod by hand (1.5' strips)	1.0 per 1,000 sq. ft.
Cut and plant sprigs by hand (not watered)	10.9 per 1,000 lin. ft.
Seed, by hand	0.5 per 1,000 sq. ft.
Overseeding, Reconditioning	0.8 per acre
Fertilize Turf	
24": sifter spreader	0.16 per 1,000 sq. ft.
Hand push spreader 36"	2.96 per acre
Tractor towed spreader 12"	0.43 per acre
Weed Control	
Spraying herbicide w/fence line truck, tank sprayer 2 ft. wide (1" either side of fence)	0.45 per 1,000 sq. ft.
Leaf Removal	
Hand rake leaves	0.42 per 1,000 sq. ft.
Vacuum 30"	0.08 per 1,000 sq. ft.
Planting Trees	
Plant tree 5-6 ft. ht.	0.44 per tree
Plan tree 2-3.5" dia.	1.0 per tree
Tree Removal	
Street tree removal	13.0 per tree
Street tree stump removal	3.5 per tree
Park tree removal	5.0 per tree
Park tree stump removal	2.0 per tree

Ammons also indicated that a report prepared by a management analysis team in Pasadena, California concluded that a ratio of one park maintenance employee for every 7-10 acres should produce ‘A-Level’ service—in other words, ‘a high-frequency mainte-

nance service' (City of Pasadena [CA] Management Audit Team, 1986, p. 9.4). However, he was quick to point out that "standards of the maintenance-employee-per-park-acreage variety and corresponding statistics reported by individual cities, are complicated by the question of developed versus undeveloped park acreage ... and therefore should be interpreted cautiously." Among ten cities he examined, ratios of 10.6 to 84.7 acres maintained per maintenance employee were reported.

The CRPA in 2003 had a ratio of approximately 73 acres of maintained park land per maintenance employee. Based on the 2004 budget and a current maintained inventory of approximately 1,240 park acres, the Authority spends nearly \$604 per acre of park land for maintenance. Based upon other maintenance divisions the research team has analyzed, this figure appears to be at the low end of the funding spectrum. As facilities and trails are developed and parks and open space areas are added, an increased burden of care will be placed upon the parks division.

Parks and Facilities Division Organization Recommendations

In order to provide for safe and high quality turf and other park facilities, the Authority should consider adequate funding to reach a ratio of 30 to 35 acres of maintained park land per maintenance employee. The Proposed Parks and Facilities Division Organization Chart (**Figure 4.6**) provides recommendations to help achieve the suggested maintenance ratio as well as to alleviate problems associated with the current organization.

The imminent population boom of the County will require the development of new facilities. Recommendations have been made to provide additional athletic fields, greenway trails, a recreation center and other facilities. The development of these facilities will require dedicated crews to oversee not only routine maintenance but also annual preventive maintenance and repairs. The proposed organization recommends the development of a crew dedicated to landscape and turf management for all parks. This crew would be responsible for all irrigation repair, chemical application and landscape maintenance in the parks.

Oversight of building repairs including plumbing, electrical, HVAC, painting and general upkeep would be the responsibility of a skilled trades crew. Under the direction of the Skilled Trades Coordinator, two support staff would complete maintenance and repairs at all recreation centers, park restrooms, pavilions and other built structures within the CRPA system. The parks manager role would be increased to oversee the daily functions of roving and stationary crews throughout the system. Dedicated crews are recommended in Hobgood, J. J. Biello and two new community parks, Lake Allatoona Regional Park and Southwest Community Park. Maintenance of all other parks should be the responsibility of two roving crews, one dedicated to parks in the south end of the county and one to parks in the north end of the county. The division of parks among two roving crews will improve accountability for maintenance and minimize time spent traveling from one facility to another.

A dedicated mechanic position should be added to the parks division to oversee routine maintenance of equipment. The increased number of pieces in the maintenance inven-

tory will eliminate the ability for this function to continue as a part-time duty of existing maintenance staff.

The initiation of a large capital improvement program will require daily oversight of a representative of the Authority to ensure quality design and construction services. A planning/construction coordinator position is recommended to oversee these duties. The current system of oversight by the Director and Parks and Facilities Division Superintendent will be increasingly difficult as responsibilities for those positions are increased above their current levels.

In order to help in the implementation of the maintenance plan, a Parks Services Coordinator should be added to the division. In addition to tracking maintenance hours and the scheduling of routine maintenance tasks and inspections, this position should be responsible for purchase orders for the division, work orders, and bidding of work to outside sources. This person can also assist the planning and construction coordinator with the processing of pay applications and other construction administration tasks.

Should the Authority determine that the suggested maintenance ratio of 30 - 35 acres per maintenance employee is unattainable within the constraints of their budget, an alternative would be to outsource maintenance of some facilities to a private landscape maintenance contractor.

Outsourcing

As a way to offset some future internal costs, the Authority may seek to explore outsourcing some parks maintenance to a private company. Outsourcing provides a way for the Authority to escape some personnel costs while providing a sustained level of maintenance by an outside group.

While the Authority may wish to keep control of overall parks maintenance, a method for determining which parks become privately maintained could be adopted. For example, the Authority may wish to continue maintenance of trails and parks with a maintained acreage level of over 3 acres. This would open up the opportunity to have smaller parks within the Authority to be maintained by an outside company with CRPA oversight.

If the Authority chooses this route, it will need to have a documented maintenance schedule for the parks and/or services to be outsourced and expected maintenance outcomes (expectations). Assistance from an outside consultant may be sought to assist in composing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to provide maintenance services.

Some benefits of outsourcing include:

- Alleviation of existing and/or future personnel costs
- Limiting the need for new capital equipment investment
- Creating new jobs with the private sector and building goodwill
- Possible upgrade of maintenance to existing and/or new facilities that are retained under Authority maintenance
- Immediate access to skills not necessarily available within the department

While the benefits sound inviting, there are some possible negative side effects to outsourcing. One is the loss of overall control of maintained sites. CRPA maintenance supervisors could not spend all their time with private crews. This lack of direct oversight may cause lack of confidence that work is being done correctly or to specification. Further, it may create a competitive atmosphere within the department that some parks are maintained better than others due to a variety of factors.

Adopt-a-Park and Volunteer Programs

The public opinion survey revealed a high number of residents who gave a vote of approval for the level of current park maintenance; it is essential to keep that vote of confidence and pride in the parks as the system grows. There are many ways of supplementing the park maintenance department's ability to keep parks and greenways in pristine condition.

One of these ways is by creating an Adopt-A-Park (or Greenway) program. Lose & Associates' research has shown that up to 50% of the total maintenance costs can be achieved through an active and well coordinated program. The following examples are from research we have done recently. It specifically addresses greenway alternative maintenance sources and alternative funding for maintenance; however, most can be applied to parks as well.

The Alpharetta, GA Recreation & Parks Department website has a "How Can I Help?" section which includes:

"Get on the volunteer list and be a "steward" of the Big Creek Greenway. You will occasionally be asked to patrol a portion of the greenway to report any damage such as fallen trees. Call 678-000-0000 to get on the list."

Atlanta, GA has established a "Trail Ranger" maintenance program which enlists local volunteers to perform routine greenway maintenance such as garbage collection and brush trimming.

A paragraph from the Cheyenne, WY website states, "Volunteers have been, and presently are, an important part of the planning and implementation of the Greenway project....a Greenway volunteer program called "Adopt-A-Spot" has been extremely successful and allows for the community to actively take part in helping to keep the Greenway trash-free and looking good. Numerous Boy Scouts have chosen the Greenway for their Eagle Scout project." In addition to volunteer maintenance, much of the post and rail fence along the greenway has been constructed by volunteers, and volunteers have planted over 1,200 trees and numerous shrubs donated by the Urban forestry Division of Parks and Recreation.

Yakima, WA formed a 20-member Board of Directors of the Yakima Greenway Foundation. This board sets policy and goals and actively participates in fund raising for all Greenway activities. The board oversees over 500 volunteers who participate in maintaining the greenway and in greenway special events. It also honors a "Volunteer of the Year" annually. This person is featured on the website.

Volunteer activities for other parks and greenways include:

Litter pickup – volunteers are used year-round to pick up litter along the greenway and at specified parks. This is done by both individuals and groups. Areas to pick up trash along greenways include along the path, in natural areas and around ponds and lakes. The parks department supplies garbage bags and litter pick-up sticks.

Gardening – Individuals or groups are used to maintain flowerbeds and plantings in parks, at greenway trailheads and along the route. Many garden clubs have volunteered on a regular schedule, adopting certain parks annually.

Special Event team – volunteers are used to coordinate, monitor, judge and provide clean-up for special runs and activities on greenways and after special events at parks.

Educational leaders – volunteers serve as guides for school field trips, educating the children and adults about the benefits of a greenway.

Weed eradication – a great and fun outing is a day ridding a trail of honeysuckle, kudzu or other invasive growth. This requires a knowledgeable leader and the provision of digging tools, carts and bags from the parks and recreation department.

Fundraising – many greenway trails have established maintenance endowments, and volunteers are needed to call and solicit donations. Other fundraising plans that have been very successful include “Buy-A-Foot” campaigns wherein individuals are solicited for a contribution of a nominal amount to maintain sections of the greenway for a year. (At somewhere near \$1 per foot +/- per mile, a successful fund of this kind can actually pay for a substantial amount of the annual maintenance on a greenway.) This concept can also be applied to parks or specific areas of a large park.

An active volunteer support of your parks department can make a huge difference in the quality of maintenance you can provide. Not only that, but the more volunteers you have involved, the greater the word-of-mouth advertising about the parks and trails, and park and trail use and awareness will both be enhanced.

Authority Organization Recommendations Overview

Organization and Staffing

The Cherokee Recreation and Parks Authority has a dynamic operation that offers a variety of recreation and park programs for the public to enjoy. As its population increases and the commercial corridors in the community swell, the ability to provide recreation and to acquire land for parks will create challenges for the Authority. Figure 4.7 at the conclusion of this section graphically illustrates all of the recommendations in this section. This graphic illustration helps to create a visual understanding of a rather complicated but efficiently designed organizational chart for the Authority’s growth over the next ten years.

Often the addition of new staff positions seems a burden on an already stretched-thin parks and recreation budget. However, take a minute to understand the importance of an adequately staffed department. The customer is the public. The most important and relevant form of advertising is word-of-mouth. An understaffed department will present a stressed environment and will provide insufficient attention to the participant in any program. An adequately staffed program and department will have the ability to give full attention to the participant, or customer. The interface the customer has with the department, whether a simple information-based call or an extended participation in a program, will result in the emotional response to the event and, thus, the word-of-mouth ripple into the community. In other words, it is wise to budget for sufficient staff as it will pay off in the future by positive buzz and greater participation in park events and programs.

Marketing, External and Internal

Communication within the Authority is a challenge due to lack of networking throughout the system. Further, communication from the main office needs to be streamlined to ensure that downline staff is appropriately and timely informed when needs arise.

Another communications snafu is that the public traditionally has looked to the Authority to provide information on scheduling of events. This may be outside the programming of the Authority and information known only to the individual athletic associations. It is advisable to establish a method with each athletic association authority whereby all of the clubs get the needed information to the Authority in a timely manner. Even though this is not the Authority's responsibility necessarily, if the public is going to turn to the authority for the information, the information must be there. It is a goodwill product.

As to external marketing, the Lose Team feels that the Authority is not reaching a significant segment of the community through its current marketing strategies. The concentration of parks and recreation facilities is in southern Cherokee, and residents outside that concentration often do not get programming information. The Team feels that the Authority can rectify this situation by following the recommendations for creating the new position of Marketing Coordinator. Many parks and recreation departments are experiencing the same marketing frustration now of residents not using the website to obtain information and to register for classes. It is imperative that an informative, current and user-friendly website be created and, then, an advertising campaign mounted to make the public aware of it. Once the public becomes used to using the website, the advertising dollars used to promote the site can be diverted to program or other marketing. It is also imperative that some avenue of registering electronically (either phone or on-line) with credit card acceptance of payment be established. For example, the City of Orinda, California did a survey of its residents and it revealed that 51% of its customers used a credit card to register. While this does not reveal that persons using a charge card would not have registered, it does show that a majority of participants use the card as a convenient way to register. That is the way America lives today.

Another important duty of the Marketing Coordinator will be to establish guidelines for sponsor partnering—the benefits to each partner and the levels of participation acceptable to the Authority. Once guidelines are established, procurement of sponsorships will be the next objective.

An adjunct to marketing is having an Executive Director who has the time and skills to be constantly out in the community, in the news and in touch with the county's populace. This will result in sponsorship monies, volunteer organization participation and a high level awareness of the Authority's programs. A continuing message of the Executive Director will be about the benefits of parks, recreation, trails and open space to the quality of life of Cherokee County citizens.

Programming

The focus of the Division has been on athletics with great success. A review of the demographics section reveals that a new look at programming will be necessary for the changing demographic profiles over the next ten years.

The recommendation for a new community center is an outgrowth of those projections. The community center will offer programming for all ages, but it will be significant to the population of 50+ who are very active seniors. Aquatics are the favorite form of activity for all ages and programming in this area can generate significant revenue. A look to naming rights for the center may be a project for the marketing department and could result in offsetting a large part of the operating budget (or capital budget if it is a significant amount).

Maintenance

The Parks Maintenance Division maintains a variety of facilities throughout the system. Facilities range from small neighborhood parks to trail systems and total approximately 1,240 acres. Most of these facilities are located in southern Cherokee and along the I-575 corridor.

Maintenance staffing within the Authority will continue to be a challenge in light of the existing and projected park development. The maintenance of existing and new facilities will continue to be a focus of the Division. As a way to address the planned growth, the Authority should implant maintenance standards and staffing ratios in order to adequately maintain parks and facilities. We recommend that a ratio of 30 - 35 acres of maintained park land per employee should be a standard the CRPA should adopt and implement. This total would be adjusted based upon the number of acres outsourced (if considered).

The Authority may want to explore outsourcing some parks maintenance to outside entities. Methods to determining whether to outsource may depend upon the size of the park, drive time to the park, and the type of park facility. While the Authority may lose some direct control over the maintenance performed, the benefits include possible cost reductions, limiting future capital equipment outlay, and possible upgrade of maintenance based upon standards initiated by the Authority.

As mentioned earlier in this section, the Maintenance Department has reached a size where an annual maintenance plan must be implemented. This plan should include daily and weekly assignments, monthly assignments and periodic maintenance tasks. The plan should allow for emergencies, periods of high stress (countywide events and tournaments) and down-time projects. Rationale for the North Crew Leader and eventual new

community center Crew Leader was presented earlier in the section. Efficiency is the keyword to this recommendation.

Overall, we applaud the Authority's accomplishments. The public has a very positive attitude toward Cherokee County's parks and programming. We feel that implementation of this new organization for the Authority will allow the department to continue achieving its high level of performance under the stress of the outstanding growth expected in the county over the next ten years.

Summary of Division Tasks, Measures and Outcomes

Task	Measure/Outcome	Responsible Party
Authority to develop goals, objectives and specific outcomes for each division	Create goals, objectives and performance measures prior to developing FY 2006 budget.	Executive Director, Assistant Director, Division Superintendents
Authority to initiate cross-training program for administrative front line personnel	Create cross-training plan and begin training FY 2005-2006.	Executive Director, Assistant Director, Administrative Superintendent
Expand email networking throughout the Authority facilities	Budget for email and networking to all facilities in FY 2005.	Executive Director, Assistant Director
Create a Communications Plan within the Authority	Begin in mid 2005 with completion by December 2005.	Executive Director, Assistant Director
Executive Director to focus on outward advocacy and building partnerships	Create partnership policy in FY 2006.	Executive Director
Determine the feasibility of creating a marketing division or outsourcing marketing responsibilities	Study to begin August 2005 with recommendations due for budget of FY 2006.	Executive Director, Assistant Director
Institute a staffing plan based upon plan recommendations and action plan; determine need for Recreation center assistant managers in plan	Initiate study of staffing plan in FY 2005 budget.	Executive Director, Assistant Director
Institute the use of web-based registration	RFP to go out in mid-year 2005 with implementation before end of FY 2005.	Executive Director, Assistant Director
Explore the feasibility of outsourcing some parks maintenance to the private sector.	Using maintenance standards, determine costs of maintaining parks (per acre). If feasible, write RFP for distribution by June 2005. If cost savings are discovered, hire firm(s) for FY 2005-2006.	Executive Director, Parks and Facilities Superintendent, Parks Services Coordinator
Determine a maintenance standard for hiring personnel as facilities, parks, and greenways are added	Begin in mid 2005. Create standard for FY 2006.	Executive Director, Parks and Facilities Superintendent, Parks Services Coordinator
Establish an "Adopt-A-Park" program for supplemental maintenance of parks system.	Begin FY 2005-2006.	Executive Director, Parks and Facilities Superintendent, Parks Services Coordinator.