

> **Georgia Association of Regional Commissions**

***The Future of Outdoor Recreation in Georgia  
2017-2021***

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Georgia State Parks, Recreation and  
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November 5, 2015



> **Good afternoon!**



**Session Overview**

- **Parks, trails, greenspace and outdoor recreation**
- **Local, regional and statewide planning**
- ***The Georgia Plan for Outdoor Recreation  
2017-2021***
- **Interactive Focus Group**



**> Session Associates**

**Eric VanDeGenachte**  
**Vanguard Contingent**



**Danny Bivins**  
**Carl Vinson**



**The Power of**  
**Parks...**



## > Healthy, Happy Communities

**Parks, trails, open spaces and recreation are core elements of vibrant and sustainable communities**

- **One of top 3 reasons businesses cite in making relocation decisions**
- **Access to parks strongly linked to reduced crime and juvenile delinquency**
- **Home-buyers willing to pay more to live close to parks**



## > But Wait, There's More...

**Parks and protected public lands proven to:**

- **Improve water quality, protect ground water and prevent flooding**
- **Improve the quality of air we breathe**
- **Provide vegetative buffers to development and produce essential habitat for wildlife**
- **Trees in cities save \$400 Billion in storm water retention facility costs**



## > But Wait, There's Even More...

### **Parks, trails and recreation amenities:**

- **Provide places for children and families to connect with nature and recreate outdoors together**
- **Strengthen community ties and bring diverse populations together**
- **People who live near parks exercise more and report better mental health, even if they don't actually exercise there**



## **Outdoor Recreation is BIG Business in Georgia**

## > GA Economic Benefits are HUGE!

**\$23.3 BILLION** per year in tourism economic activity

**231,000 jobs** connected to outdoor recreation

**\$7 Billion** in wages and salaries

**\$1.4 Billion** in state and local taxes



## > WOW! Economic Benefits Per Activity

- Golf = \$15 Billion
- Canoeing, Kayaking & Rafting = \$11.3 Billion
- Boating = \$2.7 Billion
- Camping/RV = \$3.2 Billion
- Hunting & Fishing = \$2.3 Billion
- Silver Comet Trail = \$120 Million
- Wineries/Vineyards = \$39 Million



## > Economic Impact of GA State Parks

- **7.9 million visitors in FY 2015**
- **Supported 6,044 jobs**
- **Economic impact of \$610 Million**
- **Most direct benefits realized at the host community / local level**



## > Local and Regional Park Impacts

- **Annually, local and regional parks create \$140 Billion in economic activity per year and support almost 1 million jobs nationwide.**
- **Local park events and tournaments generate both direct revenue and indirect economic activity**



> The Future of Outdoor Recreation



**The Georgia Plan for Outdoor Recreation**

- A statewide blueprint for maintaining and sustaining public outdoor recreation resources to meet the demands of Georgia's diverse and growing population
- The plan, which is updated every five years, keeps Georgia eligible for federal grant support through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)





### Key Elements:

- Inventory of local, state & federal outdoor recreation resources (SUPPLY)
- Public opinion survey, input meetings and focus groups to determine attitudes, needs and priorities for outdoor recreation (DEMAND)
- National and statewide TRENDS analysis

*GOAL: Statewide direction and action plan with defined outdoor recreation priorities for future LWCF grant cycles*



## Input and Engagement: Public & Professionals





## > Advisory Committee

**Assn. County Commissions of GA, Todd Edwards**

**Federal Lands, Melissa Memory**

**Georgia Conservancy, Robert Ramsey**

**GA Municipal Association, Catherine Fleming**

**GA Recreation & Park Association, Jimmy Gisi**

**Georgia Recreation Trails Adv. Board, Greta DeMayo**

**GA Dept Community Affairs, Elizabeth Smith**

**GA Dept Economic Development, Beda Johnson**

**GA Dept Natural Resources, Mary Kathryn Yearata**

**Quasi-Public Lands, Mike Phillips**



## > Input & Engagement

- **Statewide survey\***
- **Public meetings\***
- **Focus groups\***
- **Website accepting comments**
- **Media: Electronic, Social & Print**
- **Advisory Committee meetings**
- **DNR Board meetings**

*\* Carl Vinson Institute of Government*





## > Input & Engagement

- **Statewide survey:** 1,100 respondents
- **Local Parks Professionals:** Webinar, series short surveys
- **State & Federal Parks Professionals:** Webinar, surveys
- **Focus groups:**
  - 1) Millennials, 2) African-Americans
  - 3) Outdoor Plan Advisory Committee, &
  - 4) Local & Regional Planners (GARC)



## > Input & Engagement

### **Public Engagement Opportunities:**

#### **Public Meetings:**

Tifton: October 22

Dalton: November 2

**Perry: November 16**

#### **Public Comment Website:**

[gastateparks.org/scorp](http://gastateparks.org/scorp)



# Statewide Survey



## > Statewide Survey

**Telephone Survey of 1,100 respondents**

- 63% engaged in O.R. in last 12 months
- 71% visited public outdoor recreation area

### Top Activities:

- **Walking, jogging or running ~90%**
- **Picnic, social gathering ~80%**
- **Swimming ~70%**
- **Nature study ~70%**





## > Statewide Survey

### Generalities

#### Participants vs Non-participants

- **White**
- **Higher education**
- **Higher income**
- **~10% Spanish, Hispanic or Latino**



## > Statewide Survey

### Reasons to Recreate - Participants

- **To have fun ~80%**
- **To be with family (children) or friends ~80%**
- **Relaxing ~80**
- **Health & Exercise ~70%**
- **Experience Nature ~70%**





## > Statewide Survey

### Where Non-Participants Recreate

- Home ~80%
- Indoor facilities (e.g., gym) ~50%
- Theme parks (40%)



## > Statewide Survey

### Barriers to Recreation

- Lack of time (~60% p / ~50% np)
- No one with shared interests (~50% p / ~40% np)
- No programming (~40% p & np)
- Parks too crowded (~40% p & np)

p= Participant in outdoor recreation  
np = Non-participant in outdoor recreation





## > Statewide Survey

### Fees

- “About right” ~80%

### Willing to pay more?

- ~50% Yes (Very willing, Willing)
- ~30% No (Unwilling, Not at all willing)



## > Statewide Survey

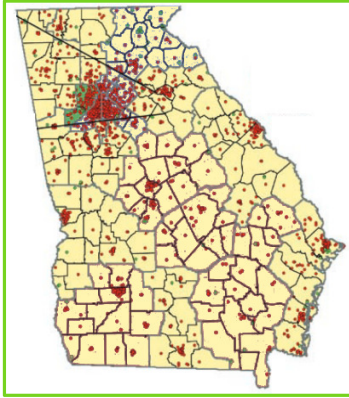
### Problems: Most significant

- 1) Limited public funding for outdoor recreation
- 2) Lack of facilities for O.R. activities
- 3) Lack of information
- 4) Poor security at parks





## > Inventory of Recreation Areas



- **Distribution**
- **Amenities**
- **Demographic Responsiveness**
- **Online updating / editing by local practitioners**
- **Accessible by planners**

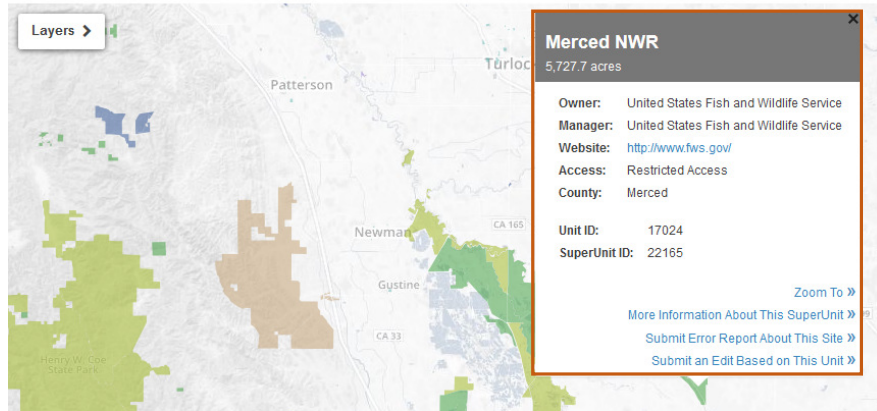


## > Inventory of Recreation Areas

### California Protected Areas Data Portal

CPA

> Map





## > Discussion: Incorporating Parks in Planning

### Public Meeting Mini-Survey

1. How often do you engage in some type of outdoor recreation?
2. What is your most preferred outdoor activity?
3. Where are you most likely to engage in this activity?
4. Why are you most likely to visit a state park?
5. Why are you most likely to visit a city or county park?
6. What prevents you from engaging in outdoor recreation more often?



## > Discussion: Incorporating Parks in Planning

### Public Meeting Discussion

1. Why is outdoor recreation important to you and your family?
2. What should be done to improve outdoor recreation?
3. What obstacles will keep these improvements from being made?
4. What other message or comments about outdoor recreation in Georgia do you have?







## > Discussion: Incorporating Parks in Planning

### GARC Discussion Questions

1. How do you engage with Park and Recreation in your region?
2. What can DNR do with DCA to get you information about recreation resources and/or needs?
3. How can GRPA (Georgia Recreation and Park Association) engage with Regional Commissions?
4. How do we collaborate?

## >For More Information

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Thank  
you!

