

Cherokee Recreation & Parks

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2019



**MAKING LIFE BETTER IN CHEROKEE COUNTY BY PRESERVING OUR
PARKS AND FACILITIES WHILE CREATING MORE ACTIVE AND
HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES THROUGH RECREATION**

Message from the Director

On behalf of the Cherokee County Recreation & Parks Advisory Board and Cherokee Recreation & Parks staff, I am pleased to present the FY19 Annual Report.

Cherokee Recreation & Parks remains committed to our mission of ***“making life better in Cherokee County by preserving our parks and facilities while creating more active and healthier communities through recreation”***. To fulfill our mission, our outstanding staff offers hundreds of programs, leagues, lessons, classes and special events throughout the year for our community. We maintain twenty public parks and three indoor facilities. We collaborate with a variety of organizations in the community to further expand our services.

We host numerous events throughout the year that benefit our local economy through sports tourism. We continue to work to meet the growing needs of our community through planning and capital projects. As a leader in the parks and recreation field, your Cherokee Recreation & Parks is working diligently to provide a diverse system of high quality public parks, recreation facilities and programs that will keep Cherokee County *the place to visit, live, work and play!*

Bryan Reynolds, CPRP
Director
Cherokee Recreation & Parks



Our Mission

Making life better in Cherokee County by preserving our parks and facilities while creating more active and healthier communities through recreation.



Our Vision

Cherokee Recreation & Parks Agency, a distinguished leader in the parks and recreation field, provides a diverse system of high quality public parks, recreation facilities and programs enabling Cherokee County to remain the place to visit, live, work and play.



Our Values

- Service with Integrity
- Accessibility & Inclusion
- Stewardship & Sustainability
- Quality & Continuous Improvement
- Health & Safety
- A Sense of Community
- Fun & Play



Cherokee Recreation & Parks Agency

MORE THAN 51 PERCENT OF CHEROKEE RECREATION & PARKS FUNDING COMES FROM EARNED REVENUE. THE NATIONAL AVERAGE FOR PUBLIC RECREATION & PARKS AGENCIES FOR 2019 WAS ABOUT 25 PERCENT.

Cherokee Recreation & Parks is committed to being a good steward of the public’s funds and providing quality and value for the community. Three primary sources contribute to the Recreation & Parks Fund; earned revenue, excise taxes on beverage sales in unincorporated Cherokee County, and transfers from the county general fund. Occasionally, other sources such as the sale of assets and use of fund balance reserves are utilized as funding sources.

Using Excise Taxes on Beverages and Earned Revenue including Program Fees, Admission Fees, Rental Fees, Leases and Sponsorships offsets the costs of providing parks and programs and lowers the burden on property tax payers.

VALUE FOR YOUR PROPERTY TAX DOLLARS

In FY19, the average homeowner paid just **\$8.61** in property taxes for recreation and parks maintenance and operations.

FY19 REVENUE

Earned Revenue	\$2,751,871
General Fund	\$1,491,954
Beverage Taxes	\$1,124,536
Other	\$158
Use of Reserves	\$0
Total Revenue	\$5,368,519

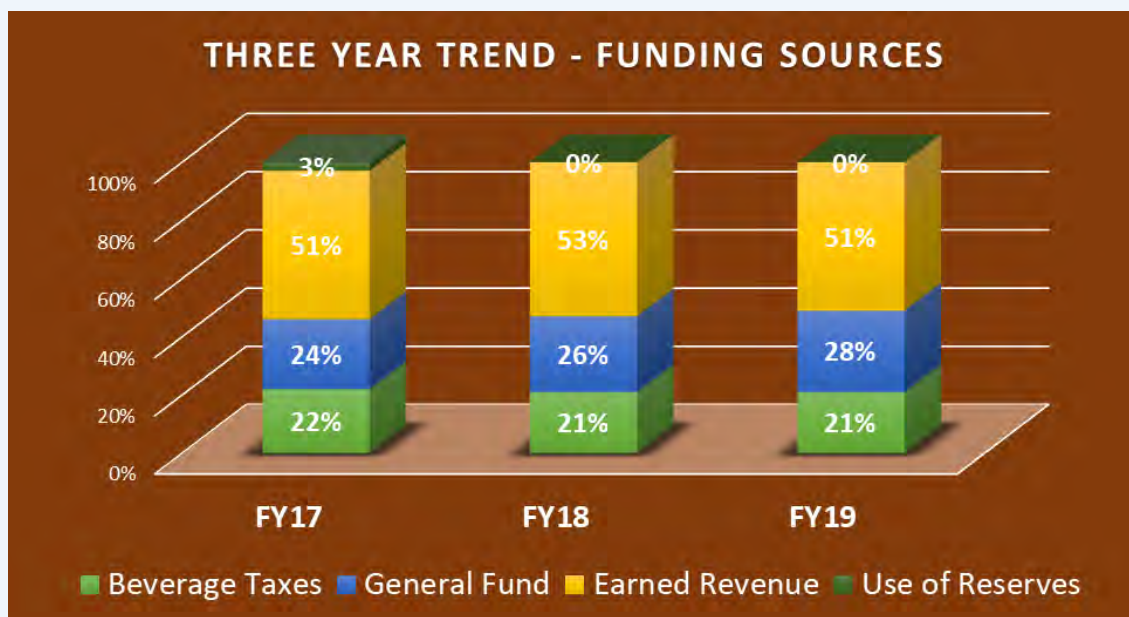
FY19 EXPENSES

Personnel	\$2,752,903
Operating	\$1,627,364
Non Department Managed	\$898,366
Total Expenses	\$5,278,632

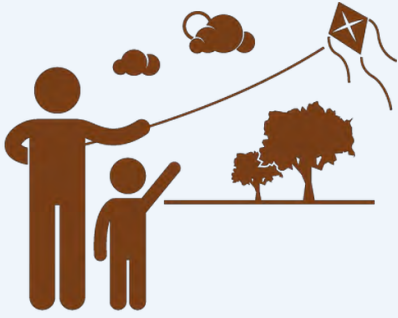
RECREATION & PARKS FUND BALANCE

Beginning Fund Balance	\$431,674
Net Income (Loss)	\$89,887
Ending Fund Balance	\$521,561

Note: Unaudited Figures. Audited figures will be included in the county’s CAFR.



Cherokee Recreation & Parks Overview



3.4 MILLION VISITORS

(includes all visits to parks and program participation during FY19)



17,735

PROGRAM REGISTRATIONS
(unique registrations for recreation programs)



2,933

BACKGROUND SCREENINGS
(conducted on volunteers - mostly youth sports coaches)



150+

PROGRAMS & EVENTS OFFERED
(athletics, aquatics, TR, active adults, instructional, outdoor, special events, etc.)



\$10.4M

**Impact on the Local
Economy thru Sports
Tourism**

82 EVENTS

(baseball and softball tournaments, swim meets, water polo matches, cricket matches and 5ks)



4,159 ACRES OF LAND PROTECTED

(includes all current and future parks and greenspace under county control)

23 public parks and recreation facilities that vary in size from 3 acres to more than 540 acres and includes 3 indoor facilities—Cherokee County Aquatic Center, South Annex Recreation Center and Union Hill Community Center.

OVER 91% of the land is maintained in its natural state. Doing so preserves clean water and air, supports plant and wildlife habitat, biodiversity and gives people places to connect with nature.



35+

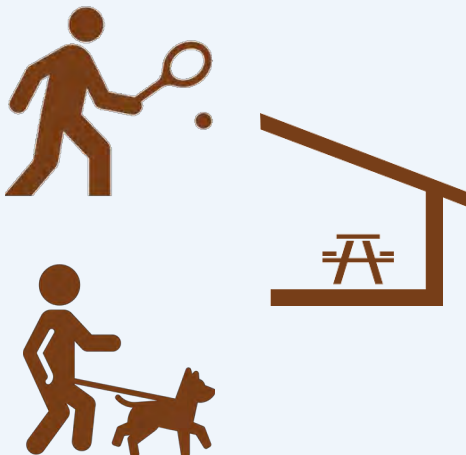
**MILES OF MANAGED
NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS**
(for hiking, mountain biking, and horse-back riding)

9.6

**ACRES OF PARKLAND
PER 1,000 RESIDENTS**
(includes only open public parks under county control)



TYPES OF FACILITIES



- 41+ Miles of Trails
- 40 Baseball / Softball Diamonds
- 34 Picnic Pavilions
- 27 Athletic Fields
- 22 Tennis Courts
- 17 Playgrounds
- 10 Pickleball Courts
- 3 Pools
- Disc Golf Course
- Dog Park
- Gymnasium
- Inline Hockey Rink
- Splash Pad
- And more...

2019 Highlights



Shaping the Future of Cherokee County Recreation & Parks

In May, Cherokee County completed the lengthy process of updating the Cherokee County Recreation, Parks, Green Space & Trails Master Plan. The Board of Commissioners approved the master plan at the May 7, 2019 meeting. The result is a community-supported plan that directly relates to the mission of the County and provides guidance to prioritize, fund, develop and manage parks, recreation facilities, green spaces, trails and recreation programs.

The plan reviews the current service levels of parks and recreation services and the operations of the Cherokee Recreation and Parks Agency (CRPA). Based on this analysis; public input; a comparison to similar communities; and national, regional and local trends in recreation, it provides a set of recommendations for the county to address the recreation and parks needs of its citizens over the next ten years.

While the plan will guide the delivery of recreation and parks services in Cherokee County for a period of ten years, the plan will be reviewed and updated periodically during that lifespan. The needs identified in this plan as well as some of the recommendations are significant.

Some of the recommendations may not be acted upon within the planning period. The intent of this plan is to identify a vision for the Cherokee County's Recreation, Parks, Green-space and Trails and provide recommendations for reaching that vision. Recreation and parks staff, working with elected officials and community leaders, will establish priorities and identify funding sources throughout the plan period.

View the master plan at <https://www.cherokeega.com/Cherokee-Recreation-and-Parks-Agency/documents.php>.



Another Award Winning Year!

In October & November, Cherokee County was recognized with several awards from the Georgia Recreation & Parks Association (GRPA).

Cherokee Youth Basketball (CYB) was recognized as the most **GRPA District 5 Outstanding Program**. This award represents the hard work and dedication that the whole Athletics team has invested into this program.

This is the fourth year in a row and sixth year out of the last eleven that our outstanding programming team has been recognized with this award.

For its tremendous outreach to the community on how to "pool safely", *CCAC Water Safety Week* was recognized as the **GRPA State Athletics/Aquatics Outstanding Special Event**.

Vicki Kelley, with the Cherokee County Aquatic Center was recognized as the **GRPA District 5 Outstanding Administrative Support Staff**. Frankie Sanders, CRPA Recreation Programs Division Director, received the award as **GRPA District 5 Outstanding Programmer**.

Finally, For the sixth time overall and the third time since 2013, Cherokee County was recognized as **GRPA District 5 Class A Agency of the Year**, the top public recreation and parks agency in northwest Georgia. Judging for this award takes into account all the accomplishments of the agency over past twelve months.

Agencies are only eligible to win this award once every three years. So, Cherokee has won it every time we have been eligible since 2013.

2019 Highlights



New Adventures on the Horizon

Through a grant with USA Archery, two CRPA staff members completed the course as Level 2 Instructors. Four more staff members have completed level 1 training. CRPA now offers introductory archery programs to kids and adults, a therapeutic archery program to individuals with special needs and archery components as part of many of our summer camps.

Through partnership with Team River Runner, CRPA offers kayak roll training and kayaking trips for veterans in our community. We also collaborated with the Cohutta chapter of Trout Unlimited to offer fly tying for veterans. These new programs are in response to the growing demand for outdoor recreation programs from our citizens.

Other new outdoor recreation opportunities this past year included day hikes, night hikes, kayaking events, and a variety of different outdoor camps. We hiked at Garland Mountain and Lewis Park and kayaked at Lake Allatoona. Camp destinations included several places throughout the entire county.



Our Events are EXTRA Special!

In its 13th year, our Guns & Hoses 5K had 686 runners and donated more than \$8,400 to local charities supported by the Cherokee County Sheriff's Department and Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services.

More than 2,000 visitors attended the first annual Great Pumpkin Fest at Cherokee Veterans Park. This free pumpkin-themed fall festival included a fun run, petting zoo, hayride, rope maze, antique tractors, face painting, bounce houses, a DJ, pumpkin decorating and trebuchets for "chunkin' your pumpkins"! There were also more than twenty local vendors, sponsors and concessionaires hawking their wares.

In its 15th year, Touch-a-Truck moved to a new home at Cherokee Veterans Park and had a record number of visitors. After feedback about the loud noises we added a "quiet time" to the beginning of this year's event for those with sensitive ears.

Other special events offered throughout the year included our Canes & Cocoa, Swim with the Grinch, Eggs-troordinary Eggs-travaganza and Paws in the Pool.



We Love Our Hoops in Cherokee!

Cherokee Youth Basketball (CYB) was recognized as the GRPA District 5 Most Outstanding Program. The league provides a safe and competitive learning environment for more than 4,000 recreational basketball players in grades K-12. The program strives to develop character, sportsmanship and teamwork. Teams represent their elementary schools and high schools during the season. This adds a sense of school pride to the program.

More than 800 volunteer coaches receive training prior to the season on rules, coaching techniques and player safety. A league staff of 25 volunteers and 60 PT employees help the full time staff organize and supervise practices and games in up to 30 gyms each week during the season. The league culminates in a post-season tournament.

In 2019, Cherokee County added a summer 3-on-3 league to our basketball program as well. This developmental league allowed 150 players from grades 3-8 the chance to further develop their basketball skills in a fast paced, fun environment.

2019 Highlights



Working with our Partners

The county collaborated with several organizations this year to increase recreation opportunities for our citizens.

In partnership with Cherokee Soccer Association, the county redeveloped Bryan Walker Field, an overgrown area formerly used as a little league field. This additional sports field will provide additional practice space for the county's growing soccer programs.

The county entered into an agreement with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to develop a boat launch at Highway 372 on the Etowah River. This launch will add more boating, canoeing and kayaking opportunities along the Etowah River.

In partnership with SORBA, the county continues to develop new mountain bike trails at Blankets Creek. Finally, through an agreement with the Allatoona Rowing Association, the county is making improvements and adding a rowing dock to Cherokee Mills Park on Allatoona Lake.



Honoring Those Who Served

In November, Cherokee County cut the ribbon on the Monument at Cherokee Veterans Park. This monument serves as a tribute to our military veterans and their service.

It includes a large landscaped area, outdoor plaza area, donor brick areas, a large American flag, parameter seat wall, a central pentagon and stone columns with bronze seals recognizing veterans from the five branches of the military. It also includes a separate area in recognition of POWs/MIAs. Citizens can honor individual veterans through the purchase of clay pavers installed in the plaza.

In January, also in Cherokee Veterans Park, through partnership with the American Legion, the county unveiled a statue in recognition of the often forgotten homeless veterans in Cherokee County and across the county. This monument includes a marble statue depicting a male and female soldier atop a large marble pentagon with the seal of the five branches of the military, landscaping, and a row of marble benches for reflection.



Great Additions to Our Parks

In April, the county completed the installation of an Outdoor Fitness Area at Hobgood Park, a Composite Playground Structure and a Challenge Course at Cherokee Veterans Park. These new components were added through SPLOST funds and with a grant through GRPA and GameTime. Each component follows Best Practices of Evidence Based Playground Activities called Play On and will serve as National Demonstration Sites through PlayCore and Shape America.

Other SPLOST projects completed throughout the year include renovations and improvements to the outdoor pool at the Cherokee County Aquatic Center, renovations to The Valley playground at JJ Biello Park, resurfacing of the tennis courts at the Cherokee Tennis Center and the addition of two batting cages at Patriots Park.

Finally, in September, using SPLOST funds, the county purchased 23 acres on Highway 372 at the Etowah River for a future park.

2019 Highlights



Promoting Parks & Recreation

Our Water Safety Month social media campaign reached over 25,000 people with daily messages to promote safe practices for kids and adults around the water. During July is Recreation & Parks Month, we hosted a scavenger hunt and photo contest in our parks. In all, our social media posts about the scavenger hunt, photo contest and other posts related to July is... reached more than 15,000 people.

At our seventh annual Youth Sports Champions Day, we recognized local teams, individual athletes and Special Olympians for winning state level and national titles during the year. Every year, athletes, coaches and parents pack the Board of Commissioners meeting to be recognized for their hard work, success and enjoy an ice cream social afterward.

In January, we hosted over 250 volunteers and their friends and families at our twelfth annual Volunteers in Parks (VIP) appreciation banquet. Our special guests enjoy dinner, a keynote speaker, a volunteer gift and door prizes provided by sponsors. We recognize outstanding volunteers within each organization.



Developing our Highly Qualified Team

Professional development is always a priority for CRPA. Most employees are members of the Georgia Recreation & Parks Association and the National Recreation & Parks Association. **In FY19, 25 team members attended multiple conferences and training sessions totaling more than 750 hours of professional development.**

Two park staff members attended GRPA Maintenance Management School II and two senior staff members graduated from GRPA Leadership II.

Many of our employees hold industry certifications including four Certified Youth Sports Administrators (CYSA), four Certified Pesticide Applicators, two Certified Parks & Recreation Professionals (CPRP), two Certified Playground Safety Inspectors (CPSI), two American Red Cross Lifeguard Instructors (LGI), two USA Archery Level 2 Instructors, a Certified Pool Operator (CPO), a Certified Facility Manager and more.



Bringing in New Dollars through Sports Tourism

Sports tourism is now a multi-billion dollar industry across the state and nation. Communities compete to host sporting events that draw visitors, and their pocketbooks, to their communities.

Utilizing our larger sports complexes such as Hobgood Park, Twin Creeks, as well as other sports fields and the Cherokee County Aquatic Center, Cherokee County hosted a total of eighty-two athletic events in 2019.

This included twenty-five swim meets, twenty-three baseball tournaments, nineteen softball tournaments, thirteen water polo tournaments, a cricket match and 5k. These events drew thousands of overnight and day visitors to Cherokee County; visitors who stayed in local hotels, ate in our restaurants and shopped with our retailers. These events create direct revenue for the county through rental fees that offsets the costs of our parks and **resulted in an estimated \$10.4 Million impact on the local economy.**

Volunteers & Community Support

Cherokee County partners with a variety of community organizations to advocate for and achieve shared goals. Corporate sponsors offset the costs of programs and services through financial contributions and gifts-in-kind. Volunteers add value to our parks and recreation programs and extend tax dollars by dedicating thousands of hours of their time to our community.

In January each year, CRPA honors our volunteers with our VIP (Volunteers in Parks) Banquet.

Additionally, this year, Robert & Tracie Strozier were recognized by the Georgia Recreation & Parks Association (GRPA) for their decades-long dedication to the Cherokee County Miracle League program as Volunteers of the Year for State of Georgia!

Thank you to all our partners for your support in 2019!

Sponsors

Northside Hospital-Cherokee
Smaxart
Coca Cola Bottling Company
Airborne Canton
Kaio Fiit
Zaxby's
Kiwanis
Planet Fitness
Hennessy Honda of Woodstock
Orange Theory Woodstock
State Farm
Superior Healthcare
Corrective Chiropractic
Around About Local Media
Cici's Pizza
Bojangles
Top Golf
Family Life Magazine
Lakota Springs
AllState The Bray Agency
Revolution Martial Arts
Cherokee Tribune
Maker's Mash

Volunteers

Canton Baseball
CCAC Pelicans
CCAC SPLASH Swim Buddies
Cherokee Hockey In-Line League
Cherokee Impact
Cherokee County Miracle League
Cherokee Reds
Cherokee Senior Softball Association
Cherokee Summer Swim Association
Cherokee Youth Basketball
Cherokee Youth Football Association
Cherokee Youth Lacrosse Coaches
Cherokee Youth Softball Coaches
Cherokee YMCA
Dwight Terry Baseball Association
East Cherokee Baseball
Friends of Garland Mountain
Georgia Academy Power
Hobgood Baseball
Leisure Spectrum Chaperones
Macedonia Baseball
NASA – Cherokee
North Cherokee Baseball
North Cherokee Youth Softball
North Georgia Falcons
Northwest Georgia Swim League
SORBA – Woodstock



CCRP Advisory Board

CRPA Leadership Team


The Cherokee County Recreation & Parks Advisory Board consists of five citizen members appointed by the Board of Commissioners. The Advisory Board elects their own officers and each member serves concurrently with the term of their appointing commissioner.

The Advisory Board’s principal duties are to advise in the initiation, planning, organization, implementation, and coordination of public recreation programs and activities for the county; and to recommend a system of parks and facilities that will accommodate the public’s need for recreation programs and activities. The Advisory Board holds regularly scheduled public meetings in Cherokee Hall at the Cherokee County Administration Building.

Current Advisory Board Members

- Jason Nelms, Chair
- Mark Preetorious, Vice Chair
- Amy Turcotte, 2nd Vice Chair
- Carlo Carbetta
- Steve Pressley

Bryan Reynolds, CPRP
Recreation & Parks Director



Jay Worley, CPRP
Athletics Division Director




Kim Whatley
Aquatics Division Director



Jordan Wood
Parks Division Director



Frankie Sanders
Recreation Division Director



Cherokee Recreation & Parks Team



Administration

Andrea Johnson, Business Manager

Aquatics

- Molly Aaron, Aquatics Coordinator
- Amber Clark, Aquatics Coordinator
- Vicki Kelley, Marketing & Customer Service Coord.
- Nathan Manning, CCAC Maintenance Lead

Athletics

- Bill Firnbach, Athletics Coordinator
- Shawn Schumacher, Athletics Coordinator
- Jessica Swanson, Athletics Coordinator
- Camille Thomas, Athletics Coordinator
- Maddie Szalwksi, Athletics Assistant

Parks

- Stephen Shroud, Parks Manager
- Tony Stargel, Parks Manager
- Matt Ellerbee, Crew Leader
- Eric Peterson, Crew Leader
- Trey Robinson, Crew Leader
- Ben Byram, Parks Maintenance Lead
- Michael Brown, Parks Maintenance
- Tyler Ballew, Parks Maintenance
- Bryant Chalkiadi, Parks Maintenance
- Josh Coleman, Parks Maintenance
- Steve Kincaid, Parks Maintenance
- Geoff Messer, Parks Maintenance
- Chris Stevenson, Parks Maintenance
- Ladarius Reed, Parks Maintenance
- James Thomason, Parks Maintenance
- Billy Yarborough, Parks Maintenance

Recreation Programs

- Lindsey Collett, Recreation Coordinator
- Jen Fischer, Recreation Coordinator
- Adam Fussell, Recreation Coordinator
- Lauren Voss, Recreation Coordinator



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