

Rocky Face Park

Master Plan



September 2009

Rocky Face Park Master Plan

Prepared for:

Alexander County

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Section I Introduction

Section Overview

Background

Methodology

Acknowledgements

Rocky Face Park

Master Plan

1. Introduction

Background

Rocky Face Mountain has a rich history dating back to the early 1900's. The site was a former quarry operation which began in 1922 and operations ceased in the early 1940's. A prison camp was located near by and a railroad reached the old quarry site. There have also been agricultural land uses such as apples, peaches, wheat and grapes near the site.

In 2003, the Felburn Foundation transferred ownership of the Rocky Face Mountain tract to the Carolina Land and Lakes Resource, Conservation and Development Inc. (CLLRC&D). The reason for the transfer was for developing and managing the land for conservation, recreation, educational and research activities. The property covers approximately 328 acres within the Brushy Mountain range, located in Alexander County, North Carolina.

As part of the land transfer agreement, development constraints were put on the property that include the following:



Old Quarry Site

- The area should be used for public education and for low-impact recreation
- Vehicle traffic should be removed from the area and most foot traffic limited to established trails.
- Existing roadways and trails may be improved as needed for management and public use.
- Woodlands and forests should be allowed to mature naturally to old-growth condition.
- Prescribed burning should be considered.
- Invasive exotic species should be removed or controlled using low-impact methods.

In 2003, the CLLRC&D and the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program signed an agreement that put Rocky Face Mountain on the North Carolina Registry of Natural Heritage Areas because of its unique qualities. This agreement also resulted in environmental constraints similar to those with the Felburn Foundation.

In October 2003, the CLLRC&D selected Kimberly-Horn and Associates to develop a project Master Plan. This initial \$1,785,575 plan focused on environmental education and included a 6,000 SF Visitor Center.

The CLLRC&D began discussions with Alexander County about submitting a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) application in 2008. The County would be the applicant for the grant and if funded, the CLLRC&D would donate the land to the county. As part of the discussions, the County and the CLLRC&D talked to the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) about doing a revised park master plan that would be a scaled down version of the earlier completed plan. In March, 2009 the County contracted with the WPCOG to complete a revised master plan and submit a PARTF application during the 2009-10 grant application cycle

The proposed Rocky Face Park presents both opportunities and challenges that affect planning and implementation for the project. Some conditions may be considered both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunities and challenges are as follows:

Opportunities

- Unique environmental characteristics
- Rare plant species
- Natural beauty/ panoramic views
- Educational opportunities
- Remote location
- Volunteer programs

Challenges

- Environmental sensitivity
- Deed restrictions
- Sanitary sewer service
- Rock and Bedrock
- Limited access, roadway capacity and minimal sight distances
- Remote location
- Security and safety

Methodology

Input was received from the following sources during the study. The project team met throughout the process with the County appointed Rocky Face Park Committee to

develop the elements of the project. In addition, meetings and interviews were conducted with the Alexander County Economic Development Director, the CLLRC&D Director and the Alexander County Parks and Recreation Director. A public meeting was held at Rocky Face Baptist Church on July 9 with over 30 citizens attending.

Acknowledgements

Dan McClure - CLLRC&D Coordinator

Rick French – Alexander County Manager

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John Presnell – Alexander County Parks and Recreation Director

Tim Johnson – Mountain Regional Trails Specialist, NC DENR

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Rocky Face Park Committee – Rev. Mark Dula, Alisha Hayes, Trenna Warren, Kent Herman, Jason Williams, George Brown, Robert Campbell, Leslie Meadows, Wendell Kirkham and Lisa Harrington

Section II Site Analysis

Section Overview

This section of the study describes and evaluates the sites natural, historic and man-made characteristics. This section is broken down into the following:

Location

Topography

Hydrology

Water Quality

Floodplains

Wetlands

Cultural Resources

Zoning

Soils

Plants Habitats/Vegetation

Wildlife

Utilities

Site Restrictions

Recommendations

II. Site Analysis

Location

Rocky Face is located in the northern part of Alexander County (See Exhibit 1). The mountain is approximately 5 miles north of the Town of Taylorsville and 4 ½ miles south of the Wilkes County line. Carolina Land & Lakes (CL&L) RC&D, Inc. holds the title to the approximately 328 acre property. Rocky Face is at the southern edge of the Brushy Mountains. The proposed park is accessed by Rocky Face Church Road.

Topography

Rocky Face is a dome shaped mass of granite gneiss with a maximum elevation of 1795 feet above sea level. There are actually two summits on the mountain separated by a ridge and saddle. The summit is approximately 600 feet above the surrounding terrain. The terrain is steep and rocky and overall outline of the mountain lies in a northeast to southwest orientation with long sloping steep slopes on each end. The north face is steeper and more vegetated while the south face has seen quarry activity.



Granite Rock Outcrop

Hydrology

Water drainage flows off Rocky Face in all directions. Because of the steep terrain, water drains off the mountain fast. At the former quarry site there is a large depression that can hold water. This area sits below the adjacent roadway grade which traps water on the site. Beaverdam Creek forms along the northern part of the 328 acre tract and this flows into the South Yadkin River. Wallace Creek flows along the western edge of Rocky Face and a tributary to the creek forms near Rocky Face Baptist Church. Rocky Face Branch is formed by two tributaries. The first tributary forms near the old quarry site on the southern end of the mountain and the other tributary forms along the eastern side of the mountain. Both Wallace Creek and Rocky Face Branch drain into the

South Yadkin River and the South Yadkin River ultimately drains into the Yadkin River basin.

Water Quality

According to the Yadkin River Basinwide Plan, none of the tributaries or streams near Rocky Face have been sampled. All of the tributaries and the South Yadkin River support their uses according to the Plan.

Because of the steep terrain, any facilities planned on the mountain should minimize grading and utilize sedimentation controls to minimize runoff.

Floodplains

A review of the appropriate NC Floodplain Map (#3862) shows that there are no floodplains on the proposed park parcel. The largest area of standing water will occur at the old quarry site.

Wetlands

National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps reveal that there are no wetlands on the proposed park property. Because of the topography and soils, runoff occurs quickly. The old quarry site at times can hold water and there has been discussion regarding the creation of a manmade wetland. There are no streams on the proposed site, therefore US Army Corps of Engineers permits would not be needed for future park activities.

Cultural Resources

There are no structures on the proposed park site nor are there documented sites of national or state cultural or historical significance. A small quarry that was abandoned in the 1920s is on the southwestern side of the site that could have historical value and there are potential sites for the former railroad, prison work camp and spring sites. A formal archeological survey has not been conducted on the site.

Zoning

The proposed Rocky Face Park parcel is zoned RA-20. Recreation parks and facilities are included under this zoning classification. Any future recreation facilities would also be allowed under this classification.

Soils

The proposed Rocky Face Park falls under the Cleveland-Ashe-Rock Outcrop. This is composed of two soil types. Rocky Face and Round Top are the only areas in the county that fall under this classification. The Cleveland-Rock outcrop complex (CnF) and the Ashe-Cleveland complex (AcD). Most of the proposed park is covered by these soils which are characterized as somewhat excessively drained with strongly to very steep slopes and areas of rock outcrop on mountain side slopes. The soils tend to be shallow and the soils are not suited for timber production, farming, or construction development. In addition, these soils present severe limitations for sanitary facilities including septic systems. There is a small area near the old quarry site that is classified Udorthents-Urban Complex (UdC). These areas tend to cut or filled during grading or similar uses. The slopes tend to be nearly level to strongly sloping. The soils are shallow and construction could occur with this classification. Because of the shallow nature of the soil particularly in the old quarry area, sanitary facilities would have severe limitations.

Wehadkee loam (WeA) is found on the east side of Rocky Face Mountain at the headwaters of one of the tributaries of Rocky Face Branch. The soil map unit where the church is located is Rion sandy loam (RnC) and has few limitations (gentle to strong sloping terrain is the only limitations. The area adjacent to the Church has not been urbanized and could be moderately suited to building sites and recreational activities. Because characteristics of the soil type vary, on site investigation is needed to determine the suitability and limitations for any proposed use.

Plant Habitats/Vegetation

The proposed Rocky Face park area is on the North Carolina Registry of Natural Heritage Areas. A survey was conducted by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program in 2002 and found significant communities of plants and wildlife. According to the survey:

- Rocky Face Mountain with its extensive exposures of granitic gneiss and areas of shallow soil contains examples of rare natural community types, including Low Elevation Granitic Dome and Montane Red Cedar-Hardwood Woodland, along with good examples of the uncommon Piedmont Monadnock Forest type.
- Rocky Face contains a number of rare species associated with rock outcrops and forest and woodlands. These include Keever's bristle moss which is considered endangered by the state and most of its world population is in the Brushy Mountains. Also included are striped garlic, shinyleaf meadow-sweet, cofaqui giant skipper and giant swallowtail.
- Rocky Face Mountain is an excellent example of a granitic dome or bornhardt, and of the exfoliation process in the massive granitic rock that creates the rock faces.



Cactus Plant

The survey recommends the use of the area for public education and for low-impact recreation. Emergency vehicles should be the only vehicles allowed on the mountain. Foot traffic on the outcrops should be limited, as much as possible to established trails. No new roadways should be constructed. New foot trails may be constructed without damage if care is given to prevent trampling of rock outcrops. Because of their fragile nature, some outcrops should be left without trail access.

Wildlife

Rocky Face Mountain provides an ideal habitat for a variety of wildlife including squirrels, rabbits, rodents and a variety of snakes and birds. Two rare animals both butterflies are known to Rocky Face. Cofaqui giant skipper feeds on yuccas that are abundant in the wooded areas. The Giant swallowtail feeds on the hop-tree. Both of these species are very rare in North Carolina and are currently listed on the NC Natural Heritage Programs list of significant animal species.

Utilities

The proposed park is accessed by Rocky Face Church Road. This road recently had a waterline installed so there would be access to public water. Electrical service would be available to the park.

There are no sewer lines in the vicinity of the park. Any facilities that are constructed that would require sewer must use a septic system. There are no overhead power lines on the park property.

Site Restrictions

Currently, there are two agreements for the proposed park area that have restrictions regarding use. The agreement for the transfer of land between the Felburn Foundation and CLLRC&D contains the following conditions in regard to the property.

- Must be used exclusively for the charitable purpose of maintaining a wildlife, scenic conservation, public recreation, and scientific research site.
- Must be maintained in its natural condition, without disturbance except when appropriate for educational, scientific and aesthetic purposes.
- Can not be sold, transferred mortgaged, or leased without prior written consent from the Felburn Foundation
- Can not be used for any commercial purpose other than charitable.
- Must allow the bulk of the general public to have access.
- May provide shared parking with Rocky Face Baptist Church.
- Must be maintained in a manner compatible with the NC Natural Heritage Program registration.

As part of the agreement between the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program And the CLLRC&D to have Rocky Face included on the North Carolina Registry of Natural Heritage Areas, the following recommendations were made:

- Use of the area for public education and for low-impact recreation is appropriate.
- Rock outcrops are fragile because of their thin soils, vehicle traffic should be removed from them. Most foot traffic should be limited to existing trails.
- Existing roadways and trails may be improved as needed for management and public use.
- Any new trails constructed should take into account the fragility of the rock outcrop communities, and leave some rocks without trail access.
- Woodlands and forests should be allowed to mature naturally to old-growth condition. Trees should not be cut unless it is determined to be needed in the restoration of more natural conditions.
- Prescribed burning should be considered
- Invasive exotic species should be removed or controlled using low-impact methods. These include the Confederate Daisy, Japanese Honeysuckle and Stiltgrass.
- Planning for any new facilities and planning for any significant changes in management should be done in consultation with the Natural Heritage Program.

Recommendations

1. Because of the fragile ecosystem and restrictions described above, proposed project activities on the mountain should be limited to hiking trails and education

and informational signage. Rock outcrops need to be evaluated to determine if viewpoints can be achieved that will protect the fragile ecosystem and provide safety for visitors. In some cases, raised platforms with fences may be needed.

2. The lower lying areas near the Church and the old quarry site are more suitable for parking, picnic shelters, educational amphitheater and buildings. Because of shallow soils at the old quarry site, the property near the church may be suited for restrooms.
3. Off-road vehicle traffic needs to be controlled. Where this is occurring, large barriers need to be constructed along with signage.

Section III Recreational Needs

Section Overview

This section of the study looks at the overall recreation facilities in the county and the Rocky Face area. It also examines the type of facilities that could be created at Rocky Face Mountain that are unavailable at other parks in the county. This section is broken down into the following:

Background

Existing Facilities

Rocky Face Park Committee

III. Recreational Needs

Background

In 1999, Alexander County contracted with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments to conduct a county-wide recreation study. The study examined existing parks and facilities and made recommendations. The twelve parks that were examined in the study were active parks with ballfields and programs such as baseball and soccer. At that time, there were no designated nature trails in the county.

The study also looked at potential parks and facilities in the county and under other general recommendations for parks and facilities in the study it was recommended:

There is a need for more passive parks and facilities throughout the county to provide nature trails, picnic areas and open space for self-directed activities.

Matheson Park is a passive park located in the Town of Taylorsville. The 7 acre park is owned and maintained by the Town of Taylorsville. The park was constructed with assistance from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) in 1998. It is located near downtown Taylorsville and offers an unpaved walking trail, playground equipment, picnic shelters and restrooms.

In 2000, the County began developing Dusty Ridge Park in the southern end of the county. This park is located in the southern end of the county where the greatest increase in population has occurred over the last 10 years. Even though there are numerous ballfields and other active recreation activities at the park, a 1 mile nature trail was created in 2001. The Barry Holler trail loops around the perimeter of the park and is a natural surface trail.



Matheson Park Walking Trail

There are other walking tracks in the county, most these are around park perimeters but there are no 1+ mile trails and no hiking trails located in the Brushy Mountains section of the county that would provide park visitors a glimpse of flora and fauna not seen at other parks in the county.

Existing Facilities

There are no existing facilities at Rocky Face Mountain. There is an unmarked trail that starts along Rocky Face Church Road and follows the ridgeline to the top of the mountain. This trail has been used for years and needs renovation. Other activities that have occurred on the mountain are 4-wheeling and people camping along the trail. In the past, rock climbing has been a popular activity along the rock wall of the old quarry. Currently, individuals hiking the mountain are parking at the church.

Section IV Facilities

Section Overview

This section describes the proposed facilities that are planned for Rocky Face Park over the next 10 years. The section is broken down into the following:

Background

Phase 1 (Years 0-3)

Phase 2 (Years 4-6)

Phase 3 (Years 7-10)

IV. Facilities

Background

Rocky Face Park will be a passive recreation park. There are factors that prohibit the area from being an active recreation park such as other parks in the county like Dusty Ridge Park. The steepness of the terrain does not allow for ballfields. The only relatively flat area is around the old quarry site and there is not enough soil to grade for ballfields. Also, the deed restrictions from the Felburn Foundation and additional restrictions from the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program allow for very limited development on the site. At the Community Meeting held on July 9, 2009, the citizens that attended want to see the park committed to the principles that the Felburn Foundation had when they purchased it. They wanted an educational low-impact recreation park that preserves the beauty of the location.

The previous chapter described the need in the county for passive parks. This chapter will look at new facilities that need to be constructed. Facilities and land acquisition are planned over the next ten years and are broken down into the following phases:

- Phase 1 (Years 0-3)
- Phase 2 (Years 4-6)
- Phase 3 (Years 7-10)

The proposed facilities will be located or originate in two areas. They are the property adjacent to the Rocky Face Baptist Church and the old quarry site. There will also be facilities or improvements that fall under general category.

Phase 1 (Years 0-3)

General Category

Trail Development

Currently, there is an unmarked and undeveloped trail that starts along Rocky Face Church Road and follows the ridgeline to the top of the mountain for approximately 1.4 miles. Along the way there are short spur trails that have been created that go to rock vistas. The trail and footpath has never been maintained and in many areas it has suffered from erosion from abuse by 4-wheelers. The primary purpose of the mountain top should be for passive hiking and walking trails. Trail development must be planned to preserve documented rare and endangered plant and animal species.

Because of damage caused by 4-wheelers at the trail head located off Rocky Face Church Road, it is recommended that during the first phase, the trail head be established at the area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church. There is an unmarked footpath that currently connects to the main trail from the property next to the church. In a future phase, a connecting trail head would be established at the old quarry site.



Trail Marker Stone Mtn. State Park

It is recommended that as part of the trail development, the trail be marked. Because of the rocky terrain, it would be very hard to erect directional signage. Therefore, a colorful symbol should be used which would be made out of plastic and nailed into trees adjacent to the trail. At areas where the trail crosses large rock outcrops, the same color symbol could be painted on the rock to lead the hiker over these areas. These methods have been used at Stone Mountain State Park in Wilkes County which has similar rocky terrain to Rocky Face. Where

they can be located, signs could be located that could give information such as distance from trailhead, distance to summit, elevation and GPS coordinates.

Because of the rugged terrain, safety is an issue on top of the mountain. Most people that hike the current unmarked and undeveloped trail to the summit will take a spur to one of the scenic rock outcrops for a scenic view. There are some outcrops that are very steep and in certain conditions, hikers could slip and injure themselves. Also, hikers veering off the main trail could become lost. Stone Mountain State Park has erected signs along its summit trail that warn people of the rugged terrain. In other parks such as South Mountain State Park, fencing has been erected to keep visitors from getting too close to the edge and possibly injuring themselves.

In addition to limiting access to certain areas for safety reasons, access needs to be limited to protect the fragile ecosystem of the rock outcrops. This can be accomplished with signage and fencing. In some areas, it may be possible to build a raised fenced platform along the outcrops. However, these are very expensive and they would have to be limited to certain areas. These platforms should be built with composite materials that will not deteriorate and be easy to maintain.



Safety Sign Stone Mtn. State Park

The trail will be natural surface. In some areas, surface material may be used to prevent erosion. There are areas along the existing trail that have washed out and new routes will need to be established parallel so that the old areas can be rehabilitated and closed. Large sections of the trail will need to be rehabilitated. This will include limited clearing, water drainage controls and some reconstruction. Sections of the trail that are on bedrock will only need navigational marking.

Where it is possible, the trail renovation and construction should strive to make the trail sustainable. Following this concept could cost more initially, but there would be less maintenance required in the long run. Because of the environmental restrictions on the property, it would be hard to follow contours that are part of the sustainable trail concept without a lot of new construction for switchbacks.



Existing Trail Rocky Face Mountain

It is recommended to have a loop in the final section of the trail, that would connect several rock outcrops and follow the summit ridge. The old existing trail beyond the proposed loop should be closed because of the steepness in the terrain.

Because of the environmental restrictions and steep topography, the main trail will be hard to design to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. These standards pertain to the % grade for trails. From the trailhead on the property adjacent to the church, it may be possible to design a small section of trail near the bottom, that could connect to the main trail and the quarry site overlook. As part of the first phase, engineering money could be used to determine whether this option is feasible.

The trail would be for foot traffic only and the only vehicular use that would be allowed would be for emergency vehicles. They would access the site through property adjacent to the church or in a future phase through the old quarry site.

Signage

Since the park is designed to be a low-impact educational recreation park, signage is important. It is proposed to erect 30 signs during the first phase of the project. Most of the signs will be erected along the trail. The signs will provide navigation, safety and environmental education information for users. Some of the remaining signs will be erected at the area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church. These signs will provide

information regarding navigation, and park regulations. Some signs will be used at the old entrance on Rocky Face Church Road to discourage 4-wheelers from using the site. Other informational signs will be used at the old quarry site.

Grading/Landscaping (Block off existing Entrance)

The existing trailhead to Rocky Face is off of Rocky Face Church Road. There is a gate at the entrance. However, 4-wheelers have made there own entrance on either side of the gate. This has caused erosion and damage to immediate area and the 4-wheelers have also caused erosion problems along the trail to the summit. To better control access, the gate needs to be removed and this entire area needs to be blocked off to prevent 4-wheelers from driving on the mountain. Surrounding large boulders could be used to block off the area. During the first phase, access to the trailhead adjacent to the church should be controlled by a gate which would be opened and closed during park hours by county personnel.

County emergency personnel would have access to the lock on the gate for emergency situations. During the next phase with the development of old quarry site area an additional trailhead will be created and this will allow an additional access for emergency personnel.



Existing Entrance used by 4-wheelers

Area Adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church

Parking

To accommodate visitors to the park, a gravel parking lot with an entrance off Rocky Face Church Road is proposed in the area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church. The parking lot would be designed to accommodate 20 vehicles. The entrance and parking should be designed to accommodate stormwater flows and to allow for impervious pavers in a future phase.

Restrooms

Restrooms are a critical part of any park. In looking at the two possibilities for restrooms, the old quarry site was ruled out because there is not enough soil available on top of the rock at the base of quarry to allow for a permitted drainfield. The area

adjacent to the Rocky Face Baptist Church would have a large enough area for a drainfield. The restrooms would include separate facilities for men and women under one roof. They would measure approximately 9' 2" x 17' and would be ADA accessible. By using pre-cast concrete, the county can save money on the cost of restrooms. Water for the restrooms would be supplied by a public waterline that runs in front of Rocky Face Church Road.

Picnic Shelter

A picnic shelter would be constructed at the area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church during the first phase. The 20' x 40' shelter would have a concrete floor along with 6 picnic tables. One of the six tables would need to be handicapped accessible. In addition, 3 charcoal outdoor grills will be at the shelter. The picnic shelter would be the only location where cooking or fires would be allowed in the park. Trash containers would also be available at the picnic shelter. Besides serving individuals and families wanting to use the shelter, it could be used for groups and for small outdoor educational programs.



Dusty Ridge Park Picnic Shelter

Informational Kiosk

As part of the effort to provide information and education at the park, an informational kiosk would be constructed at the area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church. The kiosk could provide important safety and environmental information regarding the park including information and pictures of some of the rare and unique plant and animal species on the mountain. Also, a calendar of events could be posted for programs and organized activities that may be occurring at the park.

Fencing & Gate

To secure the park site, fencing and a gate would be constructed along Rocky Face Church Road where the entrance to the area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church is located. In addition to county personnel, emergency and fire protection personnel should be given keys to gate to access in case of an accident or fire.

Old Quarry Site

Fencing & Gate

To restrict use of the old quarry site, a gate and fencing near gate need to be erected during the first phase of the project at the site of the old entrance. In addition to county personnel, emergency and fire protection personnel should be given keys to the gate in case of an accident or fire.

Quarry Overlook

For visitors using the Rocky Face Trail, the overlook to old quarry provides the most accessible vista. This sight should be developed for groups to use for educational activities. Among the uses would be for astronomers and environmental classes. To develop the overlook, fencing needs to be erected near the edge of the drop-off. Since it will be difficult to put posts into the stone, a zig-zag slit rail fence may be needed. In addition, informational/education signage should be erected where possible at the overlook. During the first phase of the project, the site would be accessed from the area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church. A low grade trail could be constructed from the proposed parking lot to the main trail and then to the overlook. During the trail development, design funds should be used to determine if the overlook could be made ADA accessible.

Phase 2 (Years 4-6)

Old Quarry Site

Wetland Demonstration Area

There is a wetland area at the old quarry site near Rocky Face Church Road. The site could be developed into an educational area for students. Improvements would include constructing a boardwalk near the wetland. Currently, the CLLRC&D is working with the Cooperative Extension and NC State on the project.

Stage

In the initial master plan completed by Kimberly-Horn in 2004, an outdoor stage was planned at the old quarry site. There is still a desire for an outdoor stage. The stage surface would be elevated and made of a composite material to resist weather deterioration. Another alternative would be to get stone masons to donate their services

and use quarry rock for the elevated stage. The quarry wall would serve as the backdrop for the stage which could accommodate educational sessions, outdoor theater groups and local musicians. The area in front of the stage would be landscaped and graded to where the public could bring lawn chairs for performances. Because of noise concerns raised by residents at the public meeting, there would not be a speaker system. Local musicians would use acoustic instruments.

Trailhead

To reach the main trail to the summit and the quarry overlook area, a trailhead would be established at the old quarry site. The trailhead should be located at the northwest corner of the old quarry site near Rocky Face Church Road. The trailhead would be a natural surface and if possible should be ADA compatible. This will depend on the topography and % grade of the area. The connector trail should also be wide enough that emergency and fire vehicles can access it.

Picnic Shelter

A picnic shelter would be constructed at the old quarry site during the second phase of the project. The shelter would be similar to the 20' x 40' shelter constructed at the area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church. It would have 6 picnic tables, outdoor grills and trash containers. The shelter should be located near the parking lot at the old quarry site.

ADA Trail

Because of the relatively flat topography and low % grade, the old quarry site provides an excellent opportunity to construct a trail that meets the ADA standards. The paved trail would be approximately 2.200 LF x 4' and would follow the property perimeter of the old quarry area. The trail would provide individuals with disabilities spectacular views of the quarry wall. The trail should extend to restrooms.

Informational Kiosk

An informational kiosk would be erected at the old quarry site. The kiosk would provide similar information regarding safety, and environmental information that the kiosk at the area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church provides. In addition, it would provide information regarding activities unique to the old quarry area such as rock climbing.

Rocky Face History Kiosk

Because of the rich history of the Rocky Face area, there is a desire of residents to see this preserved. A history kiosk would be erected at the old quarry site that would contain information regarding the area such as the old quarry operation, the prisoner camp and the railroad. The county could work with local history or other groups to maintain and update the kiosk.

Parking

To accommodate visitors using the new facilities at the old quarry site, a parking lot and improved entrance will be constructed. The gravel parking lot would accommodate up to 50 vehicles and would be located at a central area at the old quarry site. The improved entrance and parking should be designed to accommodate stormwater flows.

Restrooms

With the development of the old quarry site, the County should explore alternative septic systems such as passive solar composting toilet which does not need any topsoil. A number of other alternative systems have been developed and one of these could possibly work for the old quarry site. Another option is to use large diameter piping similar to what was used at Bakers Mountain Park in Catawba County. If the county is able to obtain property adjacent to the old quarry site, this property has soil and would be more conducive to a traditional septic system.

Purchase Adjacent Land

There are five undeveloped parcels of land adjacent and east of the old quarry site along Rocky Face Church Road. To provide a buffer and allow for future trails and facilities, the county should acquire these parcels. The parcels total approximately five acres. If acquired, the ADA trail could be extended and the area may have enough soils that allow for another restroom if warranted. Since Rocky Face Mountain is on the North Carolina Registry of Natural Heritage Areas, the county may be eligible to apply to the North Carolina Natural Heritage Trust for a grant to purchase the additional parcels.

Phase 3 (Years 7-10)

Old Quarry Site

Pave Existing Gravel Parking Lot

Since the gravel base would already be established, the gravel parking lot at the old quarry site could be paved during the third phase of the project. The county would

need to evaluate if the park visitation warrants paving the lot and also how the existing gravel lot is working.

Area Adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church

Install Pervious Pavers to Gravel Parking Lot

The County Extension Service, CLLRC&D and NC State University have been working on a design for parking that would use an pervious pavers. The pervious surface would be installed over gravel and would be easier to maintain than existing gravel. Because of the cost of the pavers, it was determined that this element would be better in a future phase.

Section V Program Needs

Section Overview

This section includes recommendations for programs that could be used at Rocky Face Park. The section is broken down into the following:

Background

Recommendations

V. Program Needs

Background

Rocky Face Park will be unique in that it will be the first totally passive park in Alexander County. As a result, there are no existing passive recreation activities in the County. The park will focus on educating visitors about the unique and fragile ecosystem of the mountain and the rich history of the area. In addition to local residents using the park, it will also be used by people outside Alexander County. The main activity in the park will be hiking along with picnic shelters, restrooms, informational signage and an outdoor stage.

Recommendations

1. Develop the following programs and activities at Rocky Face Park over the next ten years.
 - Work with area rock climbing clubs and organizations to allow them to use the Park for climbing and to also offer demonstrations for the public.
 - With the development of the quarry overlook site, an excellent area for stargazing would be established. Working with groups such as Catawba Valley Astronomy Club, classes and viewing could be made available for the public.
 - The County should work with CVCC, Alexander County School System and the Reese Institute at Lenoir-Rhyne University to establish environmental programs at the park. These could cover a variety of topics such as geology, wildlife and vegetation and environmental stewardship.
2. Strive to serve all age groups including, children, teens, adults, senior and individuals with disabilities.
3. With the completion of the ADA trail, provide opportunities for fitness and exercise.
4. Where feasible try to find programs or activities for senior.
5. Offer special events.

6. Work with local history groups to have programs on the history of the area. This could include programs on the railroad, the old prison camp and the operation of the quarry.

Section VI Cost Estimate

Section Overview

The facilities improvements planned at the park are divided into three phases over the next ten years. This section provides a cost estimate for each phase as well as the total cost to develop the park.

Background

Cost Estimate

VI. Cost Estimate

Background

The creation of Rocky Face Park will involve significant funding over the next 10 years. Most of the funding will be for facilities at the park including support facilities such as restrooms and parking. With limited resources, the County and the Park Advisory Committee felt that it would be best to phase the facilities at the park over the next 10 years. Facilities will be concentrated at the Old Quarry Site and the area adjacent to Rocky Face Church.

Cost Estimate

Phase 1 (Years 0-3)

General Categories

Trail Development	\$200,000
(Selective clearing, trail construction, barriers)	
Grading/Landscaping	\$ 5,000
(Block Off Existing entrance to 4 wheelers)	
Signage	\$ 3,000
(30@ \$100)	

Area Adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church

Parking for 20 cars	\$ 20,000
(gravel)	
Picnic Shelter	\$ 30,000
(20' x 40' concrete floor)	
Picnic Tables	\$ 3,600
(5 standard 1 handicapped)	
Outdoor Grills	\$ 1,000
(3)	
Trash Containers	\$ 200
Restrooms	\$ 50,000
Informational Kiosk	\$ 4,000
Fencing & Gate	\$ 5,000

<u>Old Quarry Site</u>	
Fencing & Gate	\$ 5,000
Quarry Overlook	\$ 5,000
(Fencing & Signage)	
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COST	\$331,800
 <u>Project Design & Engineering</u>	
(10% of project costs)	\$ 33,180
 <u>Contingency</u>	
(5% of project costs)	<u>\$ 16,590</u>
TOTAL COST PHASE 1	\$381,570
 Phase 2 (Years 4-6)	
<u>Old Quarry Site</u>	
Wetland Demonstration Area	\$ 10,000
Stage	\$ 15,000
(Wood Composite)	
Landscaping for Stage Area	\$ 5,000
Trailhead	\$ 3,000
(Connect to Existing Trail)	
Picnic Shelter	\$ 30,000
(20' x 40' concrete floor)	
Picnic Tables	\$ 3,600
(5 standard 1 handicapped)	
Outdoor Grills	\$ 1,000
(3)	
Trash Containers	\$ 200
ADA Trail	\$ 32,000
(2,200 LF x 4', includes paving, drainage, gravel	
@ \$15 a foot)	
Informational Kiosk	\$ 4,000
Rocky Face Area History Kiosk	\$ 4,000
Parking	\$ 25,000
(50 spaces gravel)	
Purchase Adjacent Land	
(5 parcels adjacent to quarry site @\$12,500 acre)	\$ 62,500
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COST	\$195,300
 <u>Project Design & Engineering</u>	
(10% of project costs)	\$ 19,530
 <u>Contingency</u>	
(5% of project costs)	<u>\$ 9,765</u>
TOTAL COST PHASE 2	\$224,595

Phase 3 (Years 7-10)

Area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church

Impervious pavers to existing parking lot \$ 94,000

Old Quarry Site

Pave existing gravel parking \$ 50,000

TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COSTS \$144,000

Project Design & Engineering

(10% of project costs) \$ 14,400

Contingency

(5% of project costs) \$ 7,200

TOTAL COST PHASE 3 \$ 165,600

TOTAL PROJECT COST (PHASE 1, 2 AND 3) \$ 771,765

Section VII Site Plans

Section Overview

This section looks at the overall design of the park. Planned facilities are shown on a map for the entire park and there are enlarged maps for facilities at the area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church and the Old Quarry Site. The section is broken down into the following:

Exhibit 1, Location Map

Exhibit 2, Proposed Facilities – Rocky Face Park

Exhibit 3, Proposed Facilities – Area Adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church/
Old Quarry Site

Section VIII Park Management

Section Overview

There are several areas of park management that will be critical to the success of the park. This section addresses park management needs and includes recommendations

Background

Staffing

Rocky Face Park Committee

Policies and Procedures

Operation and Maintenance

Funding

VIII. Park Management

Background

Alexander County has a Parks and Recreation Department that maintains many parks throughout the county. Rocky Face Park will be unique since it will be the first passive park in the county and will not have ballfields. The park will initially require for staff to open and close the facilities during operating hours and maintain the restrooms. The picnic shelter and trail should not involve much maintenance during the first years of the park.

Staffing

Recommendations:

1. As demand warrants, hire seasonal part-time staff to maintain the park. Someone will need to open and close the park during operating hours and maintain facilities such as restrooms.

Rocky Face Park Committee

Recommendations:

1. The existing Rocky Face Park Committee could provide oversight and guidance to the County during the development of Rocky Face Park. The committee's main focus should be on implementing the Rocky Face Park Master Plan.

Policies and Procedures

Recommendations:

1. Develop and adopt park rules and regulations. These policies and procedures should be posted at the park through signage and in addition to standard rules and regulations should address concerns about smoking and alcohol use in the park, fire concerns and four-wheeler damage.
2. Develop a working relationship with Rocky Face Baptist Church to share parking when needed. The County could also make the picnic shelter available to the church.

3. Develop a policy for use of the outdoor stage.

Operations and Maintenance

Recommendations:

1. Meet with DOT to determine how traffic on and near the park can be improved.
2. During the engineering/design for trail development, determine if multi-purpose trails (horse, biking) are feasible near the base of the Rocky Face Mountain.
3. Work with Alexander County Emergency Services to develop a procedure for emergencies at the park.
4. Purchase and maintain adequate and efficient maintenance equipment for the park as needed.

Funding

Recommendations:

1. Establish or seek more of a variety of funding and revenue sources for providing park services.
2. Seek grants that are available for park development.
3. The county should seek donations and volunteer assistance for the park.
4. Develop a program where citizens can donate for a bench or other park fixture in honor or memorial of an individual.
5. Identify programs where a fee could be justified.

Section IX Recommendations

Section Overview

This section provides a strategy for the County to implement the plan. Recommendations are grouped into three phases over the next ten years. The recommendations are as follows:

Phase 1 Recommendations (Years 0-3) Recommendations 1-30

Phase 2 Recommendations (Years 4-6) Recommendations 31-45

Phase 3 Recommendations (Years 7-10) Recommendations 46-47

IX. Recommendations

The recommendations in the plan are summarized in this section. They have been assigned target dates for implementation and grouped according to target dates. The recommendations are grouped into the following categories. Phase 1 (Years 0-3), Phase 2 (Years 4-6) and Phase 3 (Years 7-10)

Alexander County should use this summary as a guide and planning tool to prioritize the recommendations set annual goals, prepare budgets and set specific dates. The recommendation summary can also be used as a check off list for accomplishing the recommendations.

Phase 1 Recommendations (Years 0-3)

Site Analysis

1. Because of the fragile ecosystem and restrictions described above, proposed project activities on the mountain should be limited to hiking trails and education and informational signage. Rock outcrops need to be evaluated to determine if viewpoints can be achieved that will protect the fragile ecosystem and provide safety for visitors. In some cases, raised platforms with fences may be needed. **(P1)**
2. The lower lying areas near the Church and the old quarry site are more suitable for parking, picnic shelters, educational amphitheater and buildings. Because of shallow soils at the old quarry site, the property near the church may be suited for restrooms. **(P1)**
3. Off-road vehicle traffic needs to be controlled. Where this is occurring, large barriers need to be constructed along with signage. **(P1)**

Program Needs

4. Work with area rock climbing clubs and groups to allow them to use the Park for climbing and to also offer demonstrations to the public. **(P1)**
5. With the development of the quarry overlook site, an excellent area for stargazing would be established. Working with groups such as Catawba Valley Astronomy Club, classes and viewing could be made available for the public. **(P1)**

6. Strive to serve all age groups including, children, teens, adults and individuals with disabilities. **(P1)**
7. Where feasible try to find programs or activities for seniors. **(P1)**
8. Offer special events. **(P1)**

Facilities

9. Develop existing trail with connectors. **(P1)**
10. Develop signage for the park. **(P1)**
11. Grading/Landscaping (Block off existing entrance). **(P1)**
12. Area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church – Gravel parking for 20 cars. **(P1)**
13. Area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church – Restrooms. **(P1)**
14. Area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church – Construct 20' x 40' picnic shelter with 6 picnic tables, 3 outdoor grills and trash containers. **(P1)**
15. Area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church – Erect an informational kiosk. **(P1)**
16. Area adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church – Erect fencing & gate. **(P1)**
17. Old quarry site – Erect fencing & gate. **(P1)**
18. Old quarry site – Develop quarry overlook. **(P1)**

Park Management

Staffing

19. As demand warrants, hire seasonal part-time staff to maintain the park. Someone will need to open and close the park during operating hours and maintain facilities such as restrooms. **(P1)**

Rocky Face Park Committee

20. The existing Rocky Face Park Committee could provide oversight and guidance to the County during the development of Rocky Face Park. The committee's main focus should be on implementing the Rocky Face Park Master Plan. **(P1)**

Policy and Procedures

21. Develop and adopt park rules and regulations. These policies and procedures should be posted at the park through signage and in addition to standard rules and regulations should address concerns about smoking and alcohol use in the park, fire concerns and four-wheeler damage. **(P1)**
22. Develop a working relationship with Rocky Face Baptist Church to share parking when needed. The County could also make the picnic shelter available to the church. **(P1)**

Operation and Maintenance

23. Meet with DOT to determine how traffic on and near the park can be improved. **(P1)**
24. During the engineering/design for trail development, determine if multi-purpose trails (horse, biking) are feasible near the base of the Rocky Face Mountain. **(P1)**
25. Work with Alexander County Emergency Services to develop a procedure for emergencies at the park. **(P1)**
26. Purchase and maintain adequate and efficient maintenance equipment for the park as needed. **(P1)**

Funding

27. Establish or seek more of a variety of funding and revenue sources for providing park services. **(P1)**
28. Seek grants that are available for park development. **(P1)**
29. The county should seek donations and volunteer assistance for the park. **(P1)**
30. Develop a program where citizens can donate for a bench or other park fixture in honor or memorial of an individual. **(P1)**

Phase 2 Recommendations (Years 4-6)

Program Needs

31. The County should work with CVCC, Alexander County School System and the Reese Institute at Lenoir-Rhyne University to establish environmental programs at the park. These could cover a variety of topics such as geology, wildlife and vegetation and environmental stewardship. **(P2)**

- 32. With the completion of the ADA trail, provide opportunities for fitness and exercise. **(P2)**
- 33. Work with local history groups to have programs on the history of the area. This would include programs on the railroad, the old prison camp and the operation of the quarry. **(P2)**

Facilities

- 34. Old quarry site – Establish a wetland demonstration area. **(P2)**
- 35. Old quarry site – Construct a stage. **(P2)**
- 36. Old quarry site – Construct a trailhead to connect to existing trail. **(P2)**
- 37. Old quarry site – Construct 20' x 40' picnic shelter with 6 picnic tables, 3 outdoor grills and trash containers. **(P2)**
- 38. Old quarry site – Construct an ADA trail. **(P2)**
- 39. Old quarry site – Erect an informational kiosk. **(P2)**
- 40. Old quarry site – Erect a Rocky Face history kiosk. **(P2)**
- 41. Old quarry site – Gravel parking for 50 cars. **(P2)**
- 42. Old quarry site- Explore alternative wastewater systems for restrooms. **(P2)**
- 43. Old quarry site – Purchase adjacent land. **(P2)**

Park Management

- 44. Develop a policy for use of the outdoor stage. **(P2)**
- 45. Identify programs where a fee could be justified. **(P2)**

Phase 3 Recommendations (Years 7-10)

Facilities

- 46. Old quarry site – Pave gravel parking lot. **(P3)**
- 47. Area Adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church – Install pervious pavers **(P3)**

Section X Public Involvement

Section Overview

This section describes how Alexander County involved its citizens in its jurisdiction as the Master Plan was being developed. This section is broken down into the following:

Background

Community Meeting

X. Public Involvement

Background

Alexander County involved the public during the development of the Master Plan in two ways. First, the County appointed a Park Advisory Committee to work with the WPCOG in the development of the plan. The Advisory Committee is composed of 14 members and they began meeting in April of 2009. They will continue to meet after the completion of the plan to help coordinate the implementation phase of the project.

The County conducted a public meeting on Thursday, July 9 to discuss the proposed Master Plan and the Park. The meeting was advertised in the newspaper and was attended by over 30 citizens. At the public meeting, WPCOG staff explained the Master Plan process and citizens had questions and comments.

Community Meeting

The County conducted a public meeting on July 9 at Rocky Face Baptist Church. Citizens that attended the meeting expressed concerns about issues ranging from park security to noise created from a proposed stage. Many residents hoped that the rich history of the area would be brought out at the park. It was the consensus of the residents that they wanted to see a small passive park that would be consistent with the current restrictions for use from the Felburn Foundation and the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program. A summary of the comments received from citizens can be seen on the following page.



Rocky Face Community Meeting

**Results from Rocky Face Community Meeting
July 9, 2009**

- 1. Traffic Problem – What will be done to make traffic on roads surrounding park safe with increased traffic.**
- 2. Develop horse trails - Look to see how horse trails can be incorporated into park. Possible locations near bottom of property where terrain is not as steep. Problem could be parking for horse trailers.**
- 3. History of area – focus on the rich history of the area (perhaps erect a portion of the former rail line)**
- 4. Emergency Access – There needs to be a route for emergency vehicles to get to top for accidents. Could existing trail be used. There may be a logging road on north side of property that would work. Constraints with Felborn need to be factored in to any road development.**
- 5. Amphitheater uses - Concerns expressed on types of uses (rock concerts etc.), noise. Can these be addressed with restrictions for educational uses only.**
- 6. No Smoking – Concerns expressed about smoking in park. Can this be made a no smoking area and how would it be enforced.**
- 7. Charge fee – Some residents suggested charging an entrance fee with a larger fee for out of county residents. This could pay for services. None of the county parks have entrance fees and it would involve staff time to enforce and deal with money.**
- 8. No cooking – one resident suggested not allowing any cooking even at picnic shelter.**
- 9. Fire Concerns – Several residents expressed concerns about increased fire danger with a park. They seemed okay when they were told that there would not be any overnight camping and there would be signage only allowing fires in grills at picnic shelters.**
- 10. Four wheeler damage - There was concern expressed by residents about four-wheeler tearing up the trails. This will need to be addressed through barriers and signage.**

Dan McClure Notes:

Public Comments: horses, highway traffic into area, DOT want respond, improve line-of-sight, buses, Black Oak Ridge Road.

Securing (wild parties?) Sherriff deputies patrol area, 1970's camera club Statesville, friends from Florida, amphitheater, neighbors, history, rail lines chisel trail at end of quarry – wetland – grandfather guard at prison – fire, grill, fire protection – access to top for emergency vehicles – how will project impact taxes

Deed property to county – how will amphitheater be restricted – Carl Allen – if you take public money how will you control what comes into amphitheater – individual rights – will there be another public meeting? Who appointed park committee? Anyone can attend the committee meetings. What about adjacent land? There will signage that will warn people of private property. Also signage for no alcohol, or smoking – Where do horses fit into trails? Horseback riding contributes to economy and currently many are leaving county to ride other areas. Discussion on charging an admission fee. This would involve hiring staff and bookkeeping. Need cooking at picnic shelter.

Darrell Robinson – find out how community feels – does community support project. First grant will not build everything. This is a first step. Do you think it will be beneficial – very unique area.

David Icenhour comments

- **Expanding on the types of uses for the amplitheatre – was concern about issues of what types of groups can use or can be prevented from using amplitheater**
- **General security and staffing issues during park hours**

Section XI Appendix

This section contains a listing of various funding sources that are available to Alexander County. There are several options that are available for assistance through foundations, state and federal governments.

Funding and Resource Guide

Parks, Open Space, Land Preservation

NC Department of Environmental and Natural Resources

Extensive list of funding and tax credit resources

NC Department of Commerce

Invaluable economic statistics and funding opportunities in areas such as Heritage Tourism, Economic Impact/Tourism Research and Community Development

North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center

The center is dedicated to the development of innovative strategies to improve the lives of rural North Carolinians, with a special focus on economic opportunities for citizens with low to moderate incomes.

Parks and Recreation Trust Fund

The fund provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants to local governments for park and recreation purposes. Funding for acquisition, development or renovation.

NC Dept of Transportation Enhancements Fund (TEA21)

There are twelve funding categories including acquisition, landscaping, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

North Carolina Trails Program

- Adopt-A-Trail Grant awards funds annually to government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private trail groups for such projects as trail building, trail signage and facilities, trail maintenance, and trail information brochures and maps.
- Recreation Trails Program (RTP) trail grant program funded by Congress with money from the federal gas taxes paid on fuel used by off-highway vehicles. Its intent is to meet the trail and trail-related recreational needs identified by the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The grant applicants must be able to contribute 20% of the project cost with cash or in-kind contributions.

Urban & Community Forestry Grant Program

This is a federally funded program, which awards matching funds to encourage citizen involvement in creating and sustaining urban and community forestry programs. Municipalities, counties, regional agencies, interest groups, educational facilities and private organizations are eligible to apply for funding for projects that enhance and promote the urban forest.

The North Carolina Natural Heritage Trust Fund

This fund provides assistance to purchase

Resource Conservation & Development

Provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, improve, and sustain our natural resources and environment. There are nine regional offices serving North Carolina counties.

The Trust for Public Land

TPL helps conserve land for recreation and spiritual nourishment and to improve the health and quality of life of American communities.

Other Resources**Eat Smart, Move More NC Funding Opportunities**

Sponsored by the Division of Health and Human Services, Department of Public Health.

Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of North Carolina

The foundation supports programs that increase access to health services for the uninsured, provides health education, promotes healthy lifestyles and supports health initiatives that target children, older adults and minorities

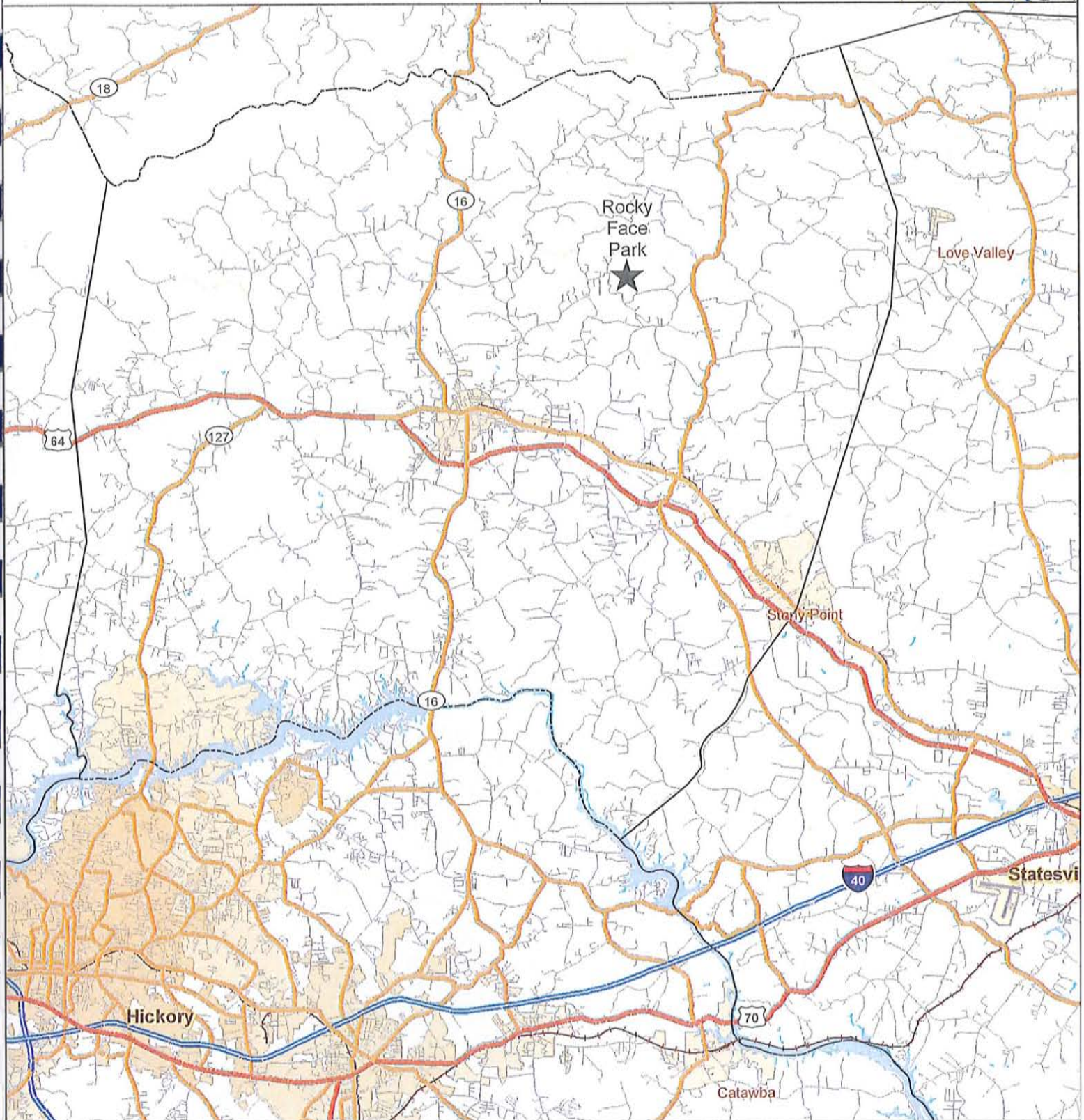
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

The foundation makes grants in North Carolina for non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organizations and institutions.

Shade Structure Grant Program

Grant opportunity for common areas without shade trees.

Exhibit 1
Location Of
ROCKY FACE PARK
Alexander County, NC



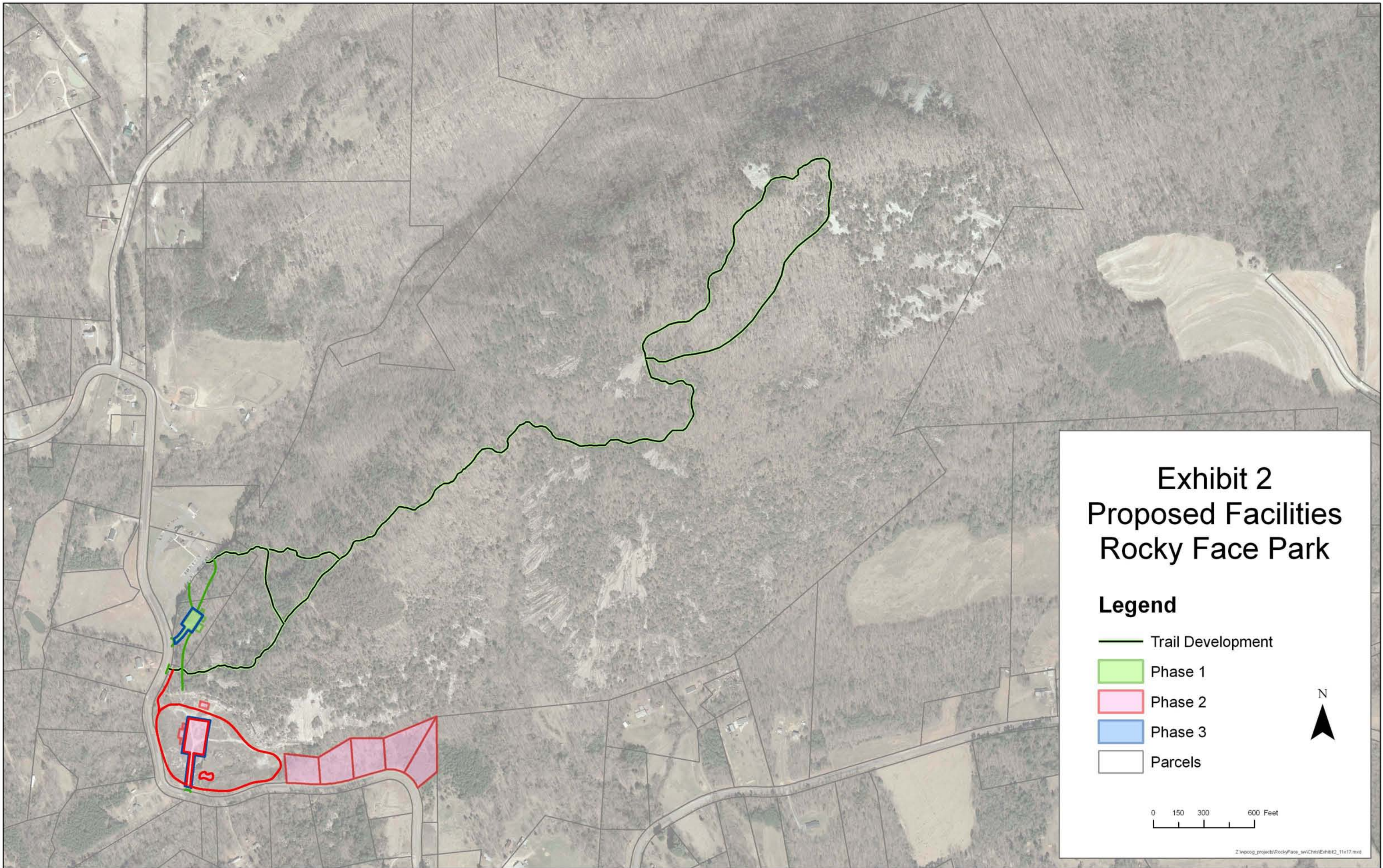


Exhibit 2 Proposed Facilities Rocky Face Park

Legend

- Trail Development
- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- Phase 3
- Parcels



0 150 300 600 Feet

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Exhibit 3 Proposed Facilities

Area Adjacent to Rocky Face Baptist Church/Old Quarry Site

Legend

- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- Phase 3



0 75 150 300 Feet

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