

Section I Introduction

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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

Vonda Martin – Recreation Resources Service

Western Piedmont Council of Governments staff – Chris Thomas, Scott Miller, John Kenny

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