

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

In the Matter Adopting an Update to the
Columbia County Forests, Parks and
Recreation Master Plan Originally Adopted
April 7, 1993

ORDER NO. 26-2026

WHEREAS, Columbia County's Forests, Parks and Recreation system plays a vital role in supporting community livability, public health, environmental stewardship, and economic vitality.; and

WHEREAS, Columbia County manages approximately 700 acres of parks, 311 acres of working forest lands, an extensive trail system including the Crown Z Trail, and multiple water-access sites; and

WHEREAS, Columbia County's Forests, Parks and Recreation system serves a population of approximately 54,100 residents plus visitors from the Portland metropolitan area, throughout the State of Oregon, and surrounding areas of Southwest Washington; and

WHEREAS, demand continues to grow for close-to-home recreation, organized sports, trails, overnight accommodations, and river access; and

WHEREAS, the County originally adopted a master plan to govern the development of its Forests, Parks and Recreation system on April 7, 1993; and

WHEREAS, over the last 18 months the Columbia County Park's Advisory Committee, with the assistance of Forests, Parks and Recreation staff, carefully reviewed the Master Plan and made changes to update its content to reflect the demands and challenges currently faced by the Columbia County's Forests, Parks and Recreation system; and

WHEREAS, these changes are necessary to provide a practical framework to guide the County's investment in Forest, Park and Recreation facilities for the next 15 years; and

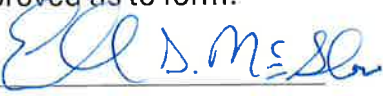
WHEREAS, an up-to-date Master Plan is key component necessary to continue to successfully obtain grant funds needed to continue to operate and update Forest, Park and Recreation facilities.

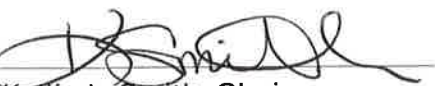
NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that the Updated Columbia County Forests, Parks and Recreation Master Plan which is attached hereto as Exhibit A is hereby adopted by the County.

Dated this 22nd day of July, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

Approved as to form:

By: 
Office of County Counsel

By: 
Kellie Jo Smith, Chair

By: Not Present
Casey Garrett, Commissioner

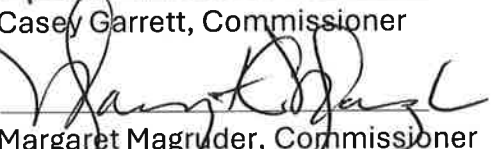
By: 
Margaret Magruder, Commissioner

EXHIBIT A

COLUMBIA COUNTY FORESTS, PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Columbia County Forests, Parks and Recreation
230 Strand St
St. Helens, OR 97051
(503) 397-2353



Prepared by:
Columbia County Forests, Parks and Recreation
ORIGINALLY ADOPTED APRIL 7, 1993
MOST RECENT UPDATE MAY 1, 2026

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Executive Summary

Columbia County's Forests, Parks and Recreation system plays a vital role in supporting community livability, public health, environmental stewardship, and economic vitality. The County manages approximately 700 acres of parks, 311 acres of working forest lands, an extensive trail system including the Crown Z Trail, and multiple water-access sites.

Serving a population of approximately **54,100 residents** (2025 estimate) plus regional visitors from the Portland metropolitan area, demand continues to grow for close-to-home recreation, organized sports, trails, overnight accommodations, and river access.

This 2026 Master Plan provides a practical 5–15-year framework to guide investment. The County's immediate focus will be on high-impact projects including the development of Asbury Park and expansion of Camp Wilkerson, while also advancing capacity-building projects such as Fisher Park.

1. **Asbury Park Development** (High Priority) – Creation of soccer and multi-use sports fields, driving range, playground, and supporting infrastructure adjacent to the Columbia County Fairgrounds in St. Helens.
2. **Camp Wilkerson Cabin Expansion** (High Priority) – Addition of new cabins, including ADA-accessible units, to increase year-round capacity and generate operating revenue.

Additional medium priorities include trail connectivity improvements and water access expansion. Maintenance and modernization of existing facilities remain foundational. These projects are strategically selected to meet current demand while positioning the County for future growth.

Disclaimer

This Master Plan provides strategic guidance and recommendations for the future development and management of Columbia County's parks, forests, and recreation system. It does not constitute a binding commitment by the Board of County Commissioners to fund or implement any specific project. All projects remain subject to future Board approval, environmental review, permitting, available funding, and consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan and land use regulations.

Priorities and timelines may be adjusted based on changing conditions, funding opportunities, and community needs.

Why This Plan Wins Funding

This Master Plan is designed to align with funding eligibility requirements while addressing demonstrated community need. Projects are strategically prioritized to maximize impact, expand system capacity, and position Columbia County for successful grant and System Development Charge (SDC) funding.

Clear Connection To Population Growth

Columbia County is experiencing steady population growth, particularly near St. Helens and Scappoose, increasing demand for accessible, close-to-home recreation. This plan prioritizes projects in high-growth areas to ensure investments directly respond to current and future community needs.

Focus On Capacity-Expanding Projects

Priority projects, including Asbury Park, Camp Wilkerson improvements, and Fisher Park development, are designed to add new recreational capacity rather than simply maintaining existing facilities. This distinction is critical for eligibility under SDC funding and many state and federal grant programs.

Strong Alignment With Identified Needs

The plan directly addresses documented gaps in the park system, including:

- Limited access to organized sports fields
- Lack of centrally located community parks
- Gaps in recreation near population centers
- Limited year-round recreational opportunities
- Need for additional ADA-accessible amenities

By linking projects to clearly identified deficiencies, the County strengthens its position in competitive funding environments.

Multiple Funding Pathways

Projects identified in this plan are structured to align with multiple funding sources, including:

- System Development Charges (SDCs) for growth-related improvements
- State and federal recreation grants
- Partnerships with local organizations and agencies
- Revenue-generating park improvements (e.g., cabins, camping)

This diversified approach increases the likelihood of successful implementation.

Regional And Community Benefit

The County's park system serves both local residents and regional users from the Portland metropolitan area. Planned investments provide broad community benefit, improve quality of life, and support economic activity through tourism and recreation.

Ready For Implementation

This plan provides a clear, phased approach to project delivery, allowing the County to move quickly as funding opportunities arise. Projects are designed to be scalable, ensuring that partial funding can still result in meaningful improvements.

This Master Plan positions Columbia County to compete effectively for funding by clearly linking community need, population growth, and strategic investment in recreation infrastructure.

Introduction

Columbia County's Forests, Parks and Recreation system plays a vital role in supporting community livability, public health, environmental stewardship, and economic vitality. The County manages a diverse system of parks, forests, trails, and water-access sites that provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

Due to Columbia County's proximity to major population centers, including the Portland metropolitan area, demand for outdoor recreation continues to grow. Residents and visitors increasingly rely on accessible, well-maintained parks for daily recreation, organized sports, and connection to natural areas.

This Master Plan provides a clear and practical framework to guide the maintenance, improvement, and expansion of the County's park system over the next 10–15 years. The plan builds upon previous planning efforts while incorporating updated data, recreation trends, and current community priorities.

The focus of this plan is to:

- Maintain and improve existing facilities
- Expand recreational capacity where growth is occurring
- Improve accessibility and safety
- Align investments with available funding sources, including System Development Charges (SDCs)
- Support long-term sustainability of the park system

By establishing clear priorities and direction, this plan positions Columbia County to make informed decisions, pursue grant funding opportunities, and continue providing high-quality recreational experiences for the community.

Location:

Columbia County is located in northwestern Oregon along the Columbia River, approximately 30 miles northwest of Portland. The County is bordered by Washington State to the north and includes a mix of rural communities, small cities, forest lands, and river corridors.

Major communities within the County include St. Helens, Scappoose, Rainier, Clatskanie, and Vernonia. The County's proximity to the Portland metropolitan area provides both opportunities and challenges, as it continues to experience population growth and increased demand for recreational amenities.

The County's geography is defined by forested hills, river systems, and open space, which provide a strong foundation for outdoor recreation. Key natural features include the Columbia River, the

Nehalem River, and extensive forest lands that support both recreation and natural resource management.

Columbia County's location makes it well-positioned to serve both residents and regional visitors seeking accessible outdoor recreation opportunities. Columbia County serves a population of approximately 54,100 residents and continues to experience steady growth, particularly in areas near St. Helens and Scappoose. The County's proximity to the Portland metropolitan region contributes to increasing demand for accessible outdoor recreation opportunities.

Recent recreation trends continue to show strong demand for local, accessible outdoor facilities. Trails, sports fields, and water access remain among the most requested recreation opportunities, particularly as population growth increases pressure on existing park resources.

Columbia County History:

Columbia County has a long history rooted in natural resource industries, including timber, fishing, and agriculture. Early settlement was shaped by the Columbia River, which served as a primary transportation and economic corridor.

Over time, the County has evolved into a mix of rural communities and small cities, while maintaining its strong connection to natural landscapes. Today, Columbia County continues to balance its historic industries with growing residential development and increasing demand for recreation and outdoor amenities.

Columbia County Economy:

Columbia County's economy is supported by a diverse blend of natural resource industries, manufacturing, small businesses, and strong employment connections to the Portland metropolitan area. This balance of local industry and regional access helps create economic stability and opportunity throughout the County.

Many residents commute to nearby urban centers for work, while locally based employers continue to serve as a vital part of the County's economic foundation. Parks, trails, campgrounds, and recreational facilities further contribute by attracting visitors, generating tourism-related spending, and enhancing overall quality of life. These amenities not only support local businesses but also play an important role in attracting and retaining residents, families, and a skilled workforce.

Columbia County Geography and Natural Characteristics:

Columbia County's landscape is characterized by forested hills, scenic river systems, fertile valleys, and abundant open space. The Columbia River forms the County's northern boundary, while waterways such as the Nehalem River provide valuable natural, ecological, and recreational resources throughout the region.

The County's varied terrain supports a wide range of outdoor opportunities, including hiking, camping, boating, fishing, wildlife viewing, and nature exploration. These natural assets are central to the County's identity, contributing to its rural character, scenic beauty, and high quality of life. They also provide the foundation for a strong parks and recreation system that serves residents and attracts visitors alike.

Forests, Parks and Recreation Department History and Funding:

Columbia County's Forests, Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the management, maintenance, and development of the County's Park system, forest lands, and recreational facilities.

Over time, the department has evolved to balance multiple responsibilities, including park operations, natural resource management, and capital project development. The system includes developed parks, campgrounds, day-use areas, trails, and forest lands that generate revenue to support operations.

Funding Overview

The County's park system is supported through a combination of funding sources, including:

- User fees and campground revenue
- Timber revenue from County Forest lands
- State and federal grants
- Partnerships with local organizations
- System Development Charges (SDCs) for growth-related improvements

This diversified funding approach is necessary to maintain existing facilities while planning for future expansion. As demand for parks and recreation continues to grow, the County must strategically align funding sources with projects that increase system capacity and meet community needs.

Key Considerations

- Maintenance of existing facilities remains the highest priority
- Capital improvements must be phased based on available funding
- Revenue-generating facilities (such as campgrounds and cabins) play an important role in long-term sustainability

- SDC funding must be used for projects that expand system capacity and serve population growth

This Master Plan provides the framework to guide funding decisions and ensure that investments are aligned with both community priorities and available financial resources.

Benefits of Parks:

Parks and recreational amenities offer a multitude of benefits to residents and communities across four key groups: the individual, the community, the environment, and the economy.

Individual:

Proximity to parks and trails within neighborhoods encourages increased physical activity, which is essential in addressing the nationwide health challenges of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. According to the Trust for Public Land, only about 25% of American adults meet the recommended activity levels, while 29% engage in no leisure-time physical activity. Accessible recreational facilities, like parks and trails, promote activities such as walking, jogging, and sports, thereby improving physical health. These spaces also support psychological well-being by helping to relieve stress, depression, and anxiety, contributing to overall relaxation. Additionally, they play a crucial role in the physical, social, and emotional development of children.

Community:

Parks and trails foster community pride by providing spaces for neighbors to gather, connect, and host events, strengthening social bonds. They also offer opportunities for residents to participate in community volunteerism. By serving as safe places for children to play, parks enhance the aesthetic appeal of neighborhoods.

Environment:

Parks and trails, often located in environmentally significant areas, help preserve open spaces, natural features (such as streams and forests), and wildlife habitats. They play a crucial role in maintaining air and water quality, especially in urban areas. Additionally, parks and trails serve as educational platforms, promoting environmental awareness and encouraging responsible interactions with nature.

Economy:

Parks and trails play a vital role in strengthening local economies in several ways. They increase property values, attract new businesses, and promote tourism. Research shows that properties located near parks and trails have higher market values compared to similar properties elsewhere. Recreational amenities are also an important factor for large businesses and industries when choosing locations. Additionally, parks and trails draw visitors, generating revenue for local businesses and boosting the overall economy.

Purpose of the Master Plan:

Columbia County adopted its first Forests, Parks, and Recreation Master Plan in April 1993, with revisions in 1995 and 1997. In May 2002, the County adopted a strategic plan for the park system titled *Columbia County Parks System: The Case for Change*.

The County government aims to provide residents with a high quality of life through services and amenities. The Forests, Parks, and Recreation Department offer recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, guided by its mission: “To provide the public with safe, natural, and desirable settings to learn, play, and explore through outdoor recreation, while promoting a positive community image, encouraging community involvement, and ensuring operational effectiveness and efficiency.”

To meet the recreational needs of residents and visitors, the Parks Department has proactively updated the Forests, Parks, and Recreation Master Plan to accommodate user needs for the next 15 years. The purpose of this document is to guide the growth and development of existing parks, prioritize improvements, identify the need for new parks and recreational facilities, and secure funding for these developments. The development plans outlined in the master plan are crucial for the County’s eligibility for grant funding, which is essential given the limited financial resources. Grant proposals that align with the needs and improvements identified in the master plan are more likely to be approved.

Planning Process:

The planning process involved research, analysis, public outreach, and work sessions with the Parks Advisory Committee. The steps included:

- Reviewing and analyzing the existing plan.
- Conducting an inventory of existing parks, trails, and recreational facilities in Columbia County, including county, city, federal, state, and private properties.

- Engaging in public outreach through household surveys, interviews with County commissioners, city managers/administrators, and recreation user groups, as well as hosting a public meeting.
- Analyzing recreational demand by researching population projections, demographics, recreational trends, travel patterns, and findings from the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and Oregon State Trails Plan, along with input from public outreach.
- Identifying and prioritizing key needs.
- Conducting improvement analysis for individual parks.
- Holding monthly meetings with the Parks Advisory Committee to discuss the development and content of the master plan.

Mission Statement

Columbia County Forests, Parks, and Recreation is committed to providing the public with safe, natural, and inviting spaces for outdoor recreation where people can learn, play, and explore. We aim to foster a positive community image, actively engage community involvement, and ensure our operations are effective and efficient.

Goals, Objectives and Actions

The following goals and objectives provide the framework for guiding the development, maintenance, and expansion of Columbia County's parks and recreation system.

Goal 1: Maintenance and Operations

Maintain and improve existing park facilities to ensure they are safe, functional, and accessible.

Objectives:

- Prioritize maintenance of existing infrastructure
- Upgrade aging facilities and equipment
- Improve Park cleanliness and usability
- Ensure compliance with safety and accessibility standards

Goal 2: Recreation Development

Expand recreational opportunities to meet current and future demand.

Objectives:

- Develop new facilities in areas experiencing population growth
- Expand opportunities for youth and family recreation
- Provide a balance of active and passive recreation
- Support community events and organized sports

Goal 3: Trails and Connectivity

Develop a connected system of trails and pathways throughout the County.

Objectives:

- Expand non-motorized trail opportunities
- Improve connectivity between parks and communities
 - Banks/Vernonia Trail
 - Camp 8 logging road
- Enhance way finding and trail access points
- Support regional trail connections

Goal 4: Natural Resource Protection

Preserve and protect natural, scenic, and environmentally sensitive areas.

Objectives:

- Protect wildlife habitat and natural features
- Promote low-impact recreation
- Preserve open space and scenic views
- Integrate environmental considerations into park planning

Goal 5: Partnerships and Community Engagement

Strengthening partnerships to support park development and operations.

Objectives:

- Collaborate with local governments, schools, and organizations
- Encourage volunteerism and community involvement
- Develop shared-use agreements where appropriate
- Increase public awareness of Park opportunities

Goal 6: Financial Sustainability

Ensure long-term financial stability of the park system.

Objectives:

- Align projects with available funding sources
- Utilize grants and partnerships
- Expand revenue-generating opportunities through events at the parks, movies in the park, youth programs, etc.
- Use System Development Charges (SDCs) for capacity-expanding projects
- Conduct a comprehensive review of park fees and update them to align with current market conditions and operational needs.

Goal 7: Accessibility and Inclusion

Provide equitable access to parks and recreation for all users.

Objectives:

- Improve ADA accessibility across facilities
- Provide diverse recreation opportunities
- Ensure parks are welcoming to all community members
- Reduce barriers to participation

Top Priority Projects (2026–2036)

Columbia County's Parks Master Plan identifies the following priority projects based on system needs, population growth, and funding alignment. These projects are intended to guide capital investment over the next 10–15 years.

1. Asbury Park Development (High Priority)

This project represents the County's highest priority capital investment and is critical to meeting current and future recreation demand.

Location: St. Helens (adjacent to Fairgrounds)

Project Elements:

- Soccer fields and multi-use sports areas
- Driving range
- Parking and site infrastructure
- Playground and support amenities
- Walking/Jogging path

- Restrooms

Why It Matters:

- Addresses lack of organized sports fields
- Serves growing population near St. Helens and Scappoose
- Provides centrally located community recreation space
- Positions the County to partner with schools, leagues, and regional events

Funding Alignment:

- Eligible for System Development Charges (SDCs)
- Directly tied to population growth and capacity expansion

2. Camp Wilkerson Cabin Expansion (High Priority)

Project Elements:

- New cabins (including ADA-accessible units)
- Supporting infrastructure improvements

Why It Matters:

- Expands overnight lodging capacity
- Increases year-round use
- Generates revenue to support park operations
- This project represents one of the County's most immediate opportunities to increase revenue while expanding access.

Funding Alignment:

- User fees and park revenue
- Grants and partnerships

3. Fisher Park Day-Use Development (Medium Priority)

Project Elements:

- Development of a new parking area to support public access
- Construction of a covered picnic shelter and day-use amenities
- Development of a soft-surface trail system with viewpoints of Scappoose Creek and surrounding habitat
- Habitat enhancement, including invasive species management and creek bank stabilization

Why It Matters:

- Adds new recreational capacity to serve a growing population
- Expands access to natural-resource-based recreation

- Distributes use across the park system, reducing pressure on existing sites
- Provides low-impact recreation opportunities, including wildlife observation and environmental education
- This project will serve residents from Scappoose, St. Helens, and surrounding areas experiencing population growth.

Funding Alignment:

Portions of this project may be eligible for System Development Charge (SDC) funding where improvements increase system capacity. Habitat restoration and environmental components may be eligible for grant funding through state and federal programs.

4. Trail Connectivity Improvements (Medium Priority)

Project Elements:

- Expansion of non-motorized trails
- Improved connections between parks and communities

Why It Matters:

- High demand for trails at local and regional levels
- Improves access to recreation near where people live
- These improvements will focus on connecting existing assets to population centers and expanding access to non-motorized recreation.

5. Water Access Expansion (Medium Priority)

Project Elements:

- Additional river access points
- Improvements to boat launch facilities

Why It Matters:

- Columbia County has extensive river frontage with limited access
- Supports boating, fishing, and tourism
- Projects will prioritize safe, accessible entry points while supporting both motorized and non-motorized users.

Implementation Approach

Projects will be phased based on funding availability, with priority given to projects that:

- Expand system capacity

- Serve population growth
- Provide broad community benefit
- Align with available funding sources

Summary

Columbia County will focus on high impact, strategically located projects that improve access, increase recreation capacity, and support long-term system sustainability.

Recreation Demand and Trends

Columbia County is increasingly serving not only its residents, but also regional users from the Portland metropolitan area. Demand for recreational opportunities continues to increase due to population growth and changing recreational preferences.

Population Growth

Columbia County currently provides approximately 700 acres of parkland serving a population of approximately 54,100 residents. Columbia County has experienced steady population growth and is expected to continue growing over the coming decades, placing additional pressure on existing parks and highlighting the need to expand recreational capacity.

Recreation Trends

Participation in outdoor recreation continues to increase at both the regional and national level. Common activities include walking, hiking, biking, camping, fishing, and organized sports.

There is also growing demand for:

- Family-oriented recreation
- Youth sports facilities
- Accessible, close-to-home recreation
- Multi-use parks that support a variety of activities

Regional Influence

Columbia County serves both residents and regional visitors, requiring the park system to balance local needs with increased demand from outside the County.

This results in:

- Increased use of parks and trails
- Greater demand for day-use facilities
- Higher expectations for park quality and amenities

Trail Demand

Trail development is one of the highest priority needs identified at the local, regional, and state levels.

Key needs include:

- Expansion of non-motorized trails
- Improved connectivity between parks and communities
- Enhanced trail access near population centers

Water Recreation Demand

Columbia County's rivers and waterways are major recreational assets. Demand continues to grow for fishing, boating, and river access.

Key needs include:

- Additional public access points
- Improved boat launch facilities
- Support for non-motorized water recreation

Key Findings

Based on current trends and system evaluation, Columbia County should prioritize:

- Sports fields and active recreation space
- Trail connectivity and access
- Overnight accommodations
- Water access improvements
- Family-oriented recreation facilities

These findings directly support the need for targeted capital improvements and strategic investment in the park system.

Recreation Priorities

- Reinvest in existing parks
- Expand overnight recreation
- Improve accessibility across facilities
- Expand trail connectivity
- Support family and youth recreation

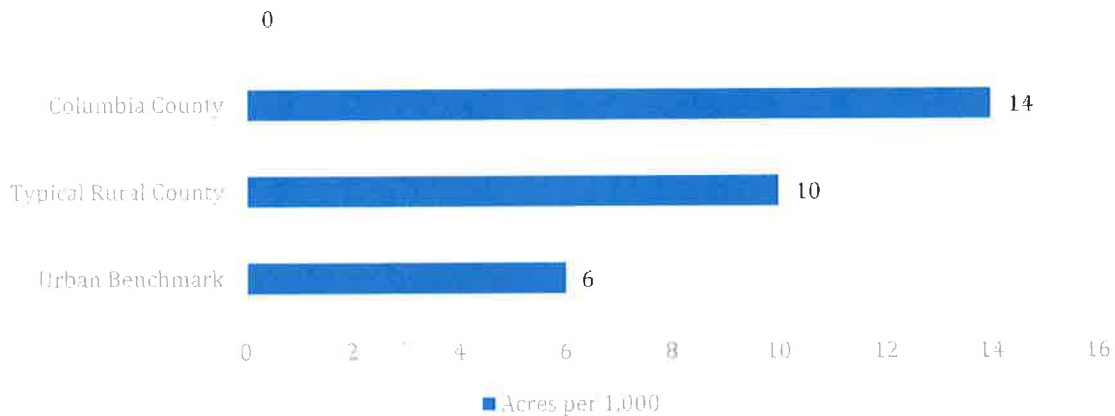
Recreation Needs, Level of Service, and Equity

Level of Service Overview

Level of Service (LOS) is a planning tool used to evaluate how well a park system meets the needs of its population. It is commonly measured as acres of parkland per 1,000 residents and helps identify gaps in service.

Columbia County currently provides approximately **700 acres of parkland** serving a population of approximately **54,100 residents**, resulting in an estimated level of service of:
14 acres per 1,000 residents

Park Level of Service Comparison



Columbia County's overall level of service compares favorably to typical rural benchmarks; however, access to facilities and their distribution vary across the County. While overall park acreage meets rural benchmarks, the County's primary need is targeted facility development in high-growth areas.

Key Gaps Identified

While the County has a strong overall park system, several key gaps exist:

- Limited access to organized sports fields, particularly soccer fields
- Limited availability of large, centrally located community parks
- Gaps in recreation access near population centers such as St. Helens and Scappoose
- Limited year-round recreational facilities
- Need for additional ADA-accessible amenities

Equity and Access Considerations

Equitable access to parks and recreation is an important component of a balanced park system. In Columbia County, access challenges are influenced by:

- Rural geography and travel distance
- Limited Park facilities near growing population areas
- Transportation access to recreation sites
- Availability of facilities for different age groups and abilities

Future Park development should prioritize:

- Locating new facilities near population centers
- Improving accessibility for all users
- Expanding opportunities for youth and family recreation
- Reducing barriers to participation
- ADA-compliant restrooms and pathways
- Accessible campsites and cabins
- Inclusive playground equipment and surfacing
- Accessible fishing and viewing opportunities
- Trail accessibility improvements where feasible
- Seating, shade, and rest areas for older adults

Planning Implications

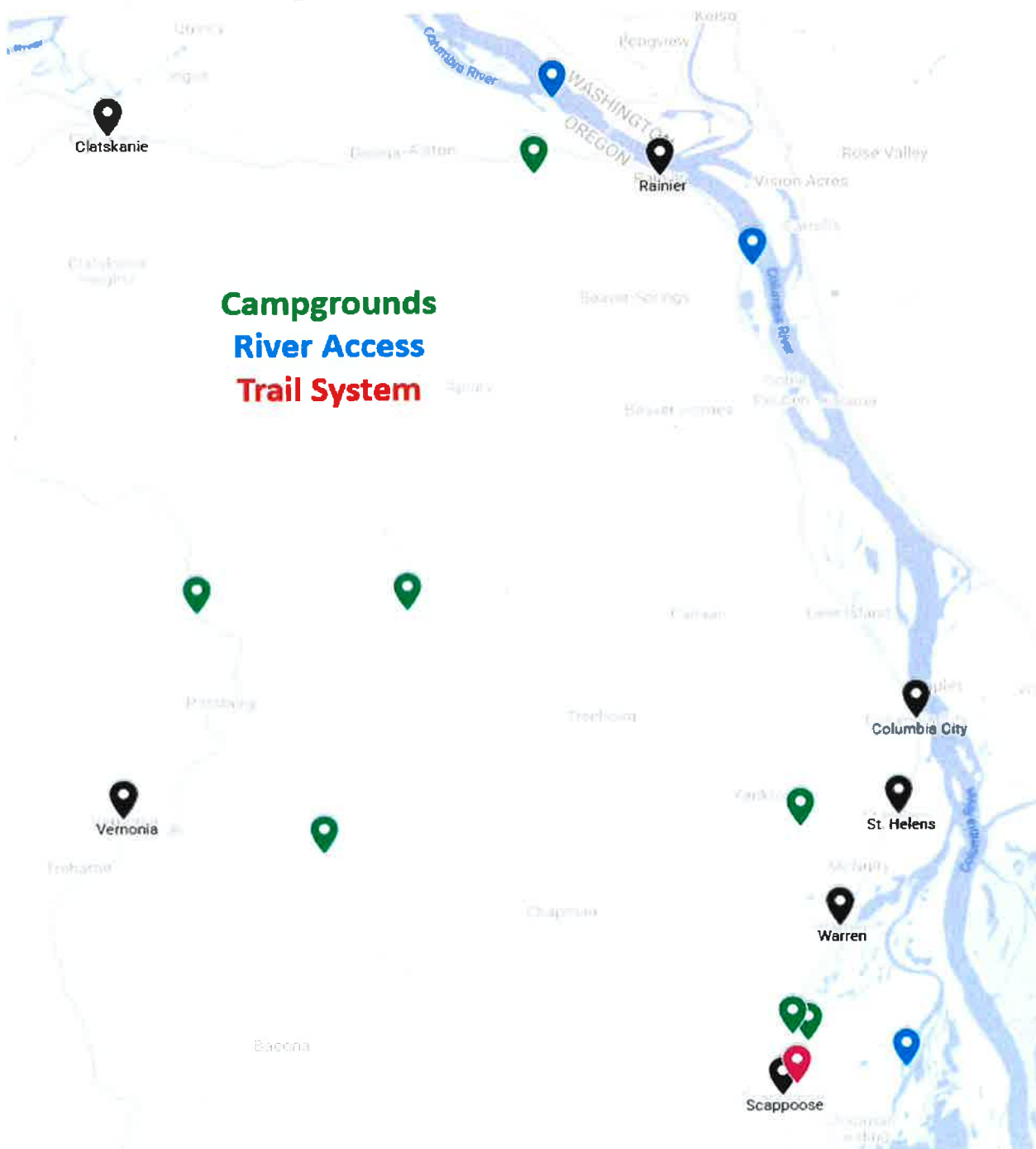
The identified gaps and level of service analysis support the following priorities:

- Development of new recreational facilities in high-growth areas
 - Expansion of capacity for organized sports and community recreation
 - Strategic investment in accessible and inclusive park infrastructure
- Projects such as **Asburry Park** directly respond to these identified needs by increasing recreation capacity and improving access for County residents.

Park System Overview and Service Areas

This map illustrates the distribution of Columbia County Parks in relation to population centers and major transportation corridors. While the County maintains a diverse park system, gaps exist in proximity to growing communities.

Columbia County Park Locations



Areas near St. Helens and Scappoose show increasing demand for accessible recreational facilities. The planned development of Asburry Park is intended to address this gap by providing centrally located recreational opportunities.

The geographic distribution of parks highlights the importance of locating new facilities near population centers. Future investments should prioritize accessibility, connectivity, and efficient use of existing infrastructure. This analysis supports prioritizing development at Asburry Park due to its central location and proximity to population growth.

Relationship with City and Regional Park Systems

In addition to County-owned facilities, residents of Columbia County are served by parks and recreational amenities provided by cities, school districts, and state and federal agencies.

City parks within communities such as St. Helens, Scappoose, Rainier, Clatskanie, and Vernonia provide important neighborhood-level recreation opportunities, including playgrounds, small parks, and local sports facilities.

The County's park system plays a complementary role in providing:

- Larger regional parks and natural areas
- Camping and overnight facilities
- Trail systems and open space
- Water access to rivers and waterways

While city parks serve localized needs, the County focuses on facilities that serve a broader population and address system-wide recreation gaps.

This distinction supports the development of projects such as Asburry Park, which provide recreation opportunities not currently available at the local level and serve residents across multiple communities and reinforce the County's role in providing regional-scale recreational opportunities.

Recreation Supply for Columbia County

Columbia County currently provides a variety of recreational facilities and opportunities through its system of parks, forests, and trails. These facilities support a wide range of activities, including camping, day-use recreation, organized sports, boating, and trail use.

For planning purposes, the County's recreational resources can be grouped into the following categories:

- **Parks with Overnight Camping**
Campgrounds and facilities that support overnight stays.
- **Day-Use Parks**
Parks are designed for picnicking, gatherings, and casual recreation.
- **Sports and Recreation Facilities**
Fields and areas used for organized sports and active recreation.
- **Boat Launches and Water Access**
Facilities providing access to rivers and waterways.
- **Trails and Open Space**
Trail systems and natural areas used for hiking, biking, and outdoor recreation.
- **Undeveloped Properties**
Lands owned by the County that may provide future recreation opportunities.

Columbia County owns, operates and/or maintains a total of 22 parks, forests and trails—21 parks; five developed with overnight camping, 3 developed as day-use only, five developed with boat dock facilities and seven undeveloped; two forests managed for timber; and one 23-mile, multi-use trail. County parks consist of approximately 700 acres, and County Forests encompass approximately 311 acres of timberlands.

Inventory of Forests and Parks maintained by Columbia County

1. Apple Valley Forest*
2. Asburry Park*
3. Beaver Boat Ramp & Dock
4. Beaver Falls Park*
5. Beaver Falls County Park*
6. Big Eddy Park
7. Camp Wilkerson Park
8. Carcus Creek Forest*
9. Carcus Creek Park*
10. Crown Z Trail
11. Dibblee Beach Park
12. Dibblee Island Park*
13. Fisher Park*
14. Gilbert River Boat Ramp & Docks
15. Hudson-Parcher Park
16. J.J. Collins Memorial Marine Park
17. J.J. Collins East and West Docks
18. Prescott Beach Park
19. Scaponia Park
20. Scappoose R.V. Park
21. Unnamed Mist Park*
22. Unnamed Forest near Rainier (Order 61-2017)



* Undeveloped County Property

Developed Parks

County Parks with Overnight Camping

Big Eddy - 9 Acres

Overview

Big Eddy's large evergreen and deciduous trees offer shade and cool breezes in the summer and beautiful color in the fall. Named after a large eddy in the river, this scenic park is close to the Banks-Vernonia Linear State Park and Trail, the 23-mile CZ Trail and the Jewell Elk Refuge.

The park hosts camp sites, a small boat launch, an open grassy area for games and play, a playground for young children, horseshoe rings, a pet area, hot showers and flush toilets. In total there are 35 campsites and 14 full paved RV hookup sites, each with a picnic table and a fire ring. Maximum RV length is 50 feet.

Big Eddy is the perfect place to spend days fishing, catching crawdads, birding, canoeing and just plain relaxing. Being deep in the forest, it also offers dark skies for those who love stargazing. The park is open all year.

Key Features

- RV and tent camping sites
- River access for fishing, swimming, and boating
- Playground and open lawn areas
- Picnic tables and shelters
- Restroom facilities with showers
- RV dump station and potable water

Current Conditions

Big Eddy Park is well-used and generally well-maintained. However, increasing use and aging infrastructure are beginning to place pressure on facilities, particularly during peak seasons.

Opportunities

- Upgrade camping infrastructure
- Improve river access and safety
- Enhance ADA accessibility
- Improve drainage and site circulation

Recommendations

- Short-Term: Address maintenance needs and improve site conditions

- Mid-Term: Upgrade restrooms and utilities
- Long-Term: Evaluate expansion or reconfiguration of campsites

Amenities:

- Access to the Nehalem River
- Non-motorized Boat Launch
- Fishing Access
- Beach for Swimming
- Playground
- Volleyball Net
- Horseshoe Pits
- Picnic Areas w/ Barbeque Grills
- Restroom Facility w/ Showers (1)
- Campsites (14 Full Hook-Up; 2 Water/Electric; 18 Tent Sites)
- Parking
- Dog Exercise Area
- Potable Water
- RV Dump Station
- Firewood

Camp Wilkerson Park - 280 Acres

Overview

The heavily wooded Camp Wilkerson offers a horse camp, 24 three-sided camp shelters referred to as Adirondack camps, 23 sites, 2 dry RV sites, three rustic two-room cabins and a day lodge complete with cooking facilities to accommodate groups of up to 250 people. All camping sites include a picnic table and fire ring. The campground is open year-round.

Remote pathways and roads lead through the park's dense evergreen and hardwood temperate forest. Trail users can travel on either forest roads or the single-track 3.5 mile Liahona Trail that loops through the park and crosses bridges over Oak Ranch Creek. Wider forest roads bring riders on five, seven or 10-mile loops through the thick forest. All trails are considered easy to moderate.



Key Features

- Cabins and campsites
- Group camping and event areas
- Extensive trail system (hiking, biking, equestrian)
- Horse camping facilities

- Lodge, schoolhouse, and amphitheater
- Restroom facilities and potable water

Current Conditions

Camp Wilkerson is a well-established park with strong and consistent use. Existing facilities are functional but aging, and there is increasing demand for improved overnight accommodation and expanded amenities.

- Opportunities
- Expand overnight lodging options
- Improve accessibility across facilities
- Enhance year-round use
- Increase revenue-generating opportunities

Cabin Development (Priority Improvement)

This project is a priority due to its ability to generate revenue while expanding year-round access. The addition of cabins represents one of the most impactful improvements at Camp Wilkerson.

Proposed Improvements

- Construction of new cabins
- Development of ADA-accessible cabins
- Expansion of overnight lodging capacity

Benefits

- Expands access for users who do not camp traditionally
- Improves accessibility and inclusivity
- Supports families, older adults, and group users
- Increase year-round use of the park
- Generates additional revenue to support park operations

Implementation Approach

- Phase 1: Develop initial cabins, including ADA-accessible units
- Phase 2: Expand cabin inventory based on demand

Recommendations

- Short-Term: Improve existing facilities and site accessibility
- Mid-Term: Develop initial cabin units and support infrastructure
- Long-Term: Expand overnight accommodation and enhance amenities

Amenities:

- Trails (Hiking, Bicycling and Equestrian Use)
- Horseshoe Pits (2)
- Community Schoolhouse w/Electricity
- Community Lodge w/ Water and electricity
- Kitchen Facilities (2 Commercial Oven/Range Units, 1 Commercial Refrigerator, 1 Conventional Refrigerator/Freezer, 1 Microwave, Dry Food Storage, Sinks)
- Picnic Areas w/ Barbeque Grills
- Picnic Shelter (1)
- Open Space Play Field
- Restroom Facility w/ Showers (1; ADA Accessible)
- Amphitheater
- Group Fire Pit
- Cabins w/ Electricity and Propane Heat (3; Sleep 6 Each)
- Horse Campsites (7 Pull through Sites)
- Corrals (2; 4 Stall Corrals, 1 multi-horse corral)
- Composting Station
- Tent Sites (10)
- Adirondack Areas (6 Areas; Each Area has 3 to 5 Shelters)
- Access to Oak Ranch Creek
- Parking
- Potable Water
- Firewood

Crown Z Trail - 23 ± miles

The Crown Z Trail is a former logging trail through rural areas of Columbia County that connects to the Banks-Vernonia State Trail in Vernonia. The trail starts in Scappoose on the Multnomah Channel at Chapman Landing and traverses through the forested areas of Columbia County to Vernonia Lake. Multiple trailheads are located along this scenic 23-mile trail, from the Chapman Landing Trailhead in Scappoose to the Holce Street Trailhead in Vernonia.

The Crown Z Trail is a partially paved, partially gravel linear trail, perfect for recreational fun during any season. Walking, hiking, horseback riding, or biking are all options at various points in the trek. Certain trailheads offer parking and picnic areas, public restrooms, and bicycle repair stations for visitors to use at their leisure.

Hudson-Parcher Park - 27 ± Acres

Overview

Hudson-Parcher Park is a hidden gem deep in the forested hills of Columbia County. A quiet place to camp or relax for a day, the park lies about four miles from Rainier, Oregon, and is traversed by Beaver Creek. Visitors can enjoy tent or RV camping, hiking, cycling, fishing, canoeing and

birding. Hudson Parcher has 10 tent sites, 25 RV sites, a bike camping site, playgrounds for the kids, picnic tables, fire rings, volleyball courts, baseball fields, flushing toilets and hot showers. This beautiful spot is perfect for events as there is a day use lodge with a kitchen available too.

Located in the county's deep temperate forest, Hudson Parcher is covered with older, second-growth forest. Douglas firs and big leaf maple offer shade while ferns, Oregon grape and other native plants provide undercover. Beaver Creek meanders through the 27-acre park, offering the opportunity to fish or catch crawdads.

Key Features

- Soccer, baseball, and softball fields
- Playground and open space
- Camping facilities
- Picnic areas and shelter
- Community cabin and kitchen
- Restroom facilities

Current Conditions

The park is heavily used for youth sports and community events. Facilities are functional but would benefit from continued maintenance and upgrades.

Opportunities

- Improve field conditions and drainage
- Upgrade support facilities
- Enhance spectator and parking areas

Recommendations

- Short-Term: Address maintenance needs and field improvements
- Mid-Term: Upgrade facilities and infrastructure
- Long-Term: Evaluate expansion of recreational amenities

J.J. Collins Memorial Marine Park - 23 ± Acres

J.J. Collins Marine Park is a beautiful little serene island in the middle of the Multnomah Channel about two miles upstream from the Gilbert River Boat Ramp and seven miles from the confluence of the Columbia River and the Multnomah Channel. JJ Collins Marine Park, also known as Coon Island, is a 23-acre island offering outstanding birding, a 1.5-mile nature trail and a restful lunch spot for boaters, complete with picnic tables and campsites. This island is only accessibly via boat but is well worth the trip for the relaxation that it provides. The park has transient moorage for visiting boaters and restrooms for visitor's convenience. With a marine park there of course is accessibility for fishing, boating, swimming, and kayaking but there also are horseshoe pits and those gorgeous trails.

Amenities:

- Access to the Multnomah Channel
- Transient Docks (2; East and West Sides of Island)
- Hiking Trails
- Picnic Areas w/ Barbeque Grill
- Picnic Shelter (1)
- Group Fire Pit
- Composting Toilets (2)
- Primitive Tent Sites (7)

Scaponia Park - 7.6 ± Acres

Scaponia Park is a favorite destination of summer travelers and fall hunters. This charming, primitive wayside recreational area features a seven-acre nature park. The campground has 12 spots and is a first come first serve location between Vernonia and Scappoose up the Scappoose-Vernonia Highway. Like most of Columbia County's parks, this is a great area to enjoy the wildlife around you and explore the trails of the nature park. This remote spot offers tent camping, parking, restrooms, picnic areas and drinking water available on site.

Amenities:

- Hiking Trails
- Picnic Areas
- Vault Toilet
- Primitive Tent Sites (12)
- Access to the Nehalem River
- Potable Water
- Parking

Scappoose R.V. Park - 2 ± Acres

Scappoose R.V. Park is located near the City of Scappoose and adjacent to the Scappoose Airport. The park is developed with tent and RV campsites, a playground and a covered picnic shelter. It is easily accessible from Highway 30 and serves a population of highway recreational vehicle users and bicyclists. Residents use the picnic and playground area, and the site's proximity to the airport attracts airplane enthusiasts. Columbia County purchased the park in 1943. Scappoose R.V. Park is open year-round and staffed with a resident host.

Amenities:

- Playground
- Picnic Areas w/ Barbeque Grills
- Picnic Shelter w/ Electricity (1)
- Restroom Facilities w/ Showers (1)
- Campsites (6 Full Hook-Up RV sites and 1 non-primitive site)
- Parking
- Potable Water

- RV Dump Station
- Firewood

County Parks (Day-Use Only)

Prescott Beach Park - 71 ± Acres

Prescott Beach Park, situated on the Columbia River near the town of Prescott, is a substantial sandy expanse adjoining Trojan Park and the decommissioned Trojan Power Plant. As the second-largest park in Columbia County, the County owns 10 acres of Prescott Beach and leases an additional 61 acres from Portland General Electric (PGE).



The origins of Prescott Beach Park date back to August 30, 1989, when the County initiated a 15-year lease with PGE following a study identifying the property as an ideal location for a riverfront park. Since 2004, the County has annually renewed the lease with PGE.

Designed with ADA-accessible facilities, the park includes day-use sites equipped with picnic tables, grills, and ample parking spaces. Its strategic position, providing direct access to the Columbia River shoreline, has established Prescott Beach Park as a favored destination for fishermen. Operating year-round with the presence of a resident host, the park ensures a welcoming and well-maintained environment for all visitors.

Amenities:

- Access to the Columbia River
- Fishing Access (ADA Accessible)
- Horseshoe Pits (3)
- Volleyball Court (1)
- Playground
- Gazebo
- Picnic Areas w/ Barbeque Grills
- Picnic Shelter (1 ADA Accessible)
- Group Fire Pits (4)
- Restroom Facilities
- Drinking Fountain
- Potable Water
- Parking

County Boat Dock and Ramp Facilities

Beaver Boat Ramp - 1.35 ± Acres

Beaver Boat Ramp is located on Highway 30 on the west side of the City of Clatskanie, at Clatskanie River mile 1.2. It is the only established boating facility in public ownership on the Clatskanie River.

The Beaver Boat Ramp parcels were originally purchased by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) between 1936 and 1957. On March 14, 1977, the County entered into a land use agreement to lease the ramp property from ODOT. The County, ODOT and the Oregon State Marine Board worked together to develop and maintain the property as a park for the public.

A legislative mandate in 1991 required ODOT to sell surplus lands, and on August 21, 1997, the Beaver Boat Ramp parcel was sold to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. On October 1st, 1997, Columbia County entered a 99-year lease from the State to use Beaver Boat Ramp for a “public wayside and public boat launching site, and/or other public recreational purposes.”

Amenities:

- Access to Beaver Creek
- Motorized Boat Launch
- Courtesy dock
- Transient Dock
- Fishing Access
- Restroom Facilities
- Rest Area/Parking

Gilbert River Boat Ramp and Docks

Gilbert River Boat Ramp is located on Sauvie Island (mile 6.3), on the Multnomah Channel and is part of the Sauvie Island Wildlife Area. It is owned by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) but maintained by the County and funded in part by the Oregon State Marine Board. The facility has restrooms, a boat ramp, boarding floats and parking facilities available. One-fourth (1/4) of a mile south, on the Gilbert River, are the Gilbert River transient docks, which accommodate boaters needing tie-up space.

Amenities:

- Access to the Multnomah Channel
- Motorized and Non-motorized Boat Launch
- Courtesy Dock
- Transient Dock
- Picnic Area
- Vault Toilet
- Parking

J.J. Collins East and West Docks

JJ Collins Marine Park is a beautiful little serene island in the middle of the Multnomah Channel about two miles upstream from the Gilbert River Boat Ramp and seven miles from the confluence of the Columbia River and the Multnomah Channel. JJ Collins Marine Park, also known as Coon Island, is a 23-acre island offering outstanding birding, a 1.5-mile nature trail and a restful lunch spot for boaters, complete with picnic tables and campsites. This island is only accessibly via boat but is well worth the trip for the relaxation that it provides. The park has transient moorage for visiting boaters and restrooms for visitor's convenience. With a marine park there of course is accessibility for fishing, boating, swimming, and kayaking but there also is horseshoe pits and those gorgeous trails.

Undeveloped County Parks

Asbury Park - 28 ± Acres

Overview

Asbury Park is a dog friendly day use park located off Sykes Road in St. Helens, next to the Columbia County Fairgrounds. This is a great place to take your dogs to throw a ball or stick as most of the park is designated as an off-leash area. So let the dogs out and run around as there is plenty of space to do so because it is an undeveloped County-owned property. The site represents one of the most significant opportunities for future park development within the County's system.

Due to its location near existing infrastructure and population centers, Asbury Park is well-positioned to serve both residents and the broader community.

Recreation Demand and Need

Columbia County is experiencing continued population growth, particularly in areas near St. Helens and Scappoose. This growth is increasing demand for recreational facilities, including organized sports fields and family-oriented recreation spaces.

Currently, the County has limited capacity for:

- Soccer fields and organized sports
- Multi-use recreation facilities
- Large, centrally located community recreation spaces

Development of Asbury Park directly addresses these identified gaps.

Proposed Development

The development of Asbury Park is envisioned as a multi-use recreational complex that supports a range of activities.

Key Improvements

- Development of soccer fields
- Construction of a driving range
- Development of parking and site infrastructure
- Development of playground
- Supporting utilities and circulation improvements

SDC Justification

The Asbury Park project is consistent with the intended use of System Development Charges (SDCs) for the following reasons:

Capacity Expansion

The project introduces new recreational facilities that increase the County's ability to serve a growing population.

Growth-Related Need

The need for additional recreation facilities is directly tied to population growth and increased demand for organized sports and community recreation.

System-Wide Benefit

The project serves residents across the County and is not limited to a single neighborhood or user group.

Alignment with Master Plan Goals

The project supports key goals of this Master Plan, including:

- Expansion of recreational opportunities
- Development of facilities near population centers
- Support for youth and family recreation
- Long-term system sustainability

Implementation Approach

Development of Asbury Park is recommended to occur in phases:

- **Phase 1:** Site planning, permitting, and parking development
- **Phase 2:** Construction of soccer fields and basic amenities
- **Phase 3:** Development of driving range and additional improvements

Priority Level

Asbury Park is identified as the County's Highest Priority capital investment.

Recommendations:

Short-Term: Complete planning, design, and initial site work

Mid-Term: Construct core recreation facilities (fields and parking)

Long-Term: Expand amenities and recreational offerings

Beaver Falls Park - 30 ± Acres



Beaver Falls Park is located on Beaver Falls Road in the Clatskanie-Delena area. The Beaver Falls property was originally acquired by Columbia County through the foreclosure of delinquent taxes, sold to the State of Oregon and then returned to the County in the 1960s to be used for “public park purposes.” Beaver Falls Park is centered around Beaver Falls which cascades 52 feet into Beaver Creek.

Carcus Creek Park - 52 ± Acres

Carcus Creek Park was acquired by Columbia County in 1944 as the result of tax foreclosures. The park originally consisted of approximately 292 acres of Douglas Fir and Hemlock timber lands on a tributary of Carcus Creek, in the hills southwest of Swedetown Road, near Clatskanie. On October 21st, 1970, the Board of County Commissioners designated the property as a County Park, but on September 30th, 1992, the Commissioners adopted an order to redesignate 240 acres of the County Park as County Forest, to be used for timber harvests. 52 acres surrounding the creek and Carcus Creek Falls were preserved as a park to protect the natural and scenic attributes of the area. Carcus Creek Park is landlocked by private property and has no public access currently.



Dibblee Beach - 23 ± Acres

Nestled between the railroad tracks to the north of Highway 30 and the state-owned Dibblee Point, Dibblee Beach boasts a unique location. Dibblee Point serves as a natural boundary, creating a separation between the beach and the majestic Columbia River. Interestingly, a small inlet at the northwest end presents an opportunity for non-motorized boaters to safely access the river. This hidden gem is characterized by a lengthy and narrow expanse, predominantly covered in sandy terrain.

Adding to its allure, this precious parcel of land became the proud possession of Columbia County in January 1969, having been transferred from the Port of St. Helens. As a result, Dibblee Beach

stands as not only a scenic retreat but also a historical testament to the region's evolution and the community's stewardship of its natural treasures.

Dibblee Island - 101 ± Acres

Dibblee Island is located in the Columbia River approximately three miles downriver from Rainier. The island is part of the river's natural landscape and provides important habitat for wildlife, including fish and migratory birds, while contributing to the scenic and ecological character of the Columbia River corridor.

Fisher Park - 9 ± Acres

Fisher Park is located on Old Columbia River Highway near Scappoose. Fisher Park was conveyed to the County on November 22nd, 1967 from James and Barbara Fisher with the condition that said property "be used for public park and recreation purposes, however no overnight camping is to be permitted on said premises." Scappoose Creek runs through the Fisher Park property.

Fisher Park is currently undeveloped and represents an opportunity to expand day-use recreational capacity within the County park system. Future improvements may include development of a small parking area, a covered picnic shelter, and a soft-surface trail system providing access to Scappoose Creek and opportunities for wildlife viewing, including native turtle habitat.

These improvements would increase public access to natural-resource-based recreation, serve residents from nearby growing communities, and help distribute use across the County park system. Habitat enhancement efforts, including invasive species management and creek bank stabilization, may also be pursued to improve environmental conditions while supporting passive recreation.

County Forests

Carcus Creek Forest - 240 ± Acres

Carcus Creek Forest spans 240 acres situated in Section 19, Township 6 North, Range 3 West, WM, Columbia County, Oregon. Originally part of Carcus Creek Park, it was officially designated as a County Forest in September 1992. Managed by the County, the forest serves as a vital resource for timber harvests, contributing funds to support the County's parks.

In the mid-1990s, a clear-cutting and reforestation initiative encompassed 40 acres of Carcus Creek Forest. Subsequent thinning activities occurred in 1999, 2000 (covering about 200 acres), and 2002, 2003 (for the remaining 40 acres). Another clear-cutting operation took place in 2005, involving an additional 40 acres of the park. The County is currently doing another clear-cutting operation of about 50 acres that will be reforested.

To guide the forest's management, Columbia County engaged Woodland Management, Inc. as a consultant to present various forest management options for Carcus Creek Forest. The County's approach is centered on sustaining yields to ensure responsible and balanced forest utilization.

Apple Valley Forest - 71 ± Acres

Apple Valley Forest consists of 71 acres located in N1/2 NE 1/4, Section 3, Township 3 North, Range 2 West, WM, Columbia County, Oregon. Apple Valley Forest was acquired by Columbia County in 1971 through tax foreclosures. Due to a problem with the foreclosure process, the property was logged in 2003 to pay the heirs of previous property owners. A subsequent County ordinance stated that “proceeds from the sale of forest products from Apple Valley County Forest and any interest generated from such proceeds shall be placed in the Fair Fund, as provided by the Columbia County Fair Ordinance.”

Dibblee Island was designated County Forest in 1996 (see master plan p. 40)

Other Recreational Opportunities

Dibblee Point

Dibblee Point is a 110-acre site along the Columbia River northeast of the City of Rainier. The property is owned by the State of Oregon and managed by the Department of State Lands as a deposit site for dredge spoils (sand). Approximately 60 acres (of Dibblee Point) are leased by a local sand quarry, but the remaining 50 acres are open to the public for recreational activities. The area is a popular location for fishing, horseback riding, hiking, picnicking and boating. Dibblee Point is undeveloped, except for birdhouses, and trails that were originally created by ATV users. ATVs are no longer permitted on the site. The property consists mostly of sand, cottonwood forests and a small lake.

Trails

According to the Oregon Trails 2005-2014: Trails Plan, “there is a need for a shared vision between local, state and federal recreation providers on a regional scale that can be used to identify trail development priorities.” The plan further states that an “overall vision is essential in order to see trail projects through to completion and to ensure that individual trail projects make sense as part of a larger trail system.”

Federal, state and local entities recognize the importance of trails. The National Trails System Act of 1968 gave national recognition to the growing demand for recreation trails and denoted four types of trails – National Recreation Trails, National Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails and Connecting or Side Trails. Section three of the National Trails System Act defines recreation trails as those located in and near urban areas where there is the greatest need. Scenic trails are long distance trails with significant scenic, historic, natural and cultural features (i.e., Pacific Crest Trail and Appalachian Trail). Historic trails are developed to follow a route of travel of national historic

significance (i.e., Lewis and Clark Trail) and connecting or side trails join these trails and/or provide additional access points to these trails.

In 1971, Oregon passed the State's Recreation Trails System Act (ORS 390.950 to 390.990). The purpose of the Act is to establish a system of trails for hiking, horseback riding and bicycling. Additional emphasis is to be placed upon developing trails in and connecting, highly scenic areas.

Trails are to be located with the following priorities:

1. on state land;
2. on other public land (with permission); and
3. on private land (subject to permission and restrictions).

Columbia County Maintained Trails

1. **Camp Wilkerson Trails** - Perimeter Trail: 4.7-mile loop around the exterior of Camp Wilkerson; 2.5 miles of interior trails
2. **J.J. Collins Memorial Marine Park Trails** - Perimeter Trail: 0.75-mile loop around the island; 0.125-mile trail from the east side of the island to the west side of the island
3. **Crown Z Trail - 23 miles**

The Crown Z Trail spans 23 miles, serving as a non-motorized, multi-use pathway accommodating hiking, biking, and equestrian activities. Following a historic logging road, the trail extends from Chapman Landing in Scappoose to the City of Vernonia. Originally established as a railroad from 1906 to 1943 to facilitate timber industry transportation, it saw contributions from various owners, including Simcoe, Fred Chapman, and Henry Turish. In 1944, Crown Z acquired the property, transforming the railroad into a logging road.

Initiating efforts in 1993, Columbia County aimed to purchase the Crown Z Logging Road to convert it into a public trail. The successful acquisition from Hancock Forest Management and others occurred in December 2004. A Conceptual Plan for the trail was finalized in mid-2007.

In recognition of its significance, the Trail attained National Recreational Trail status in June 2023.

Developed Parks

Beaver Boat Ramp

Priority Goals

None (currently)

Short-Term Goals

None (currently)

Long-Term Goals

- Upgrade the stormwater drainage system
- Expanding the parking lot to increase user capacity
- Pursue Clean Marina Certification from the Oregon State Marine Board

Big Eddy Park**Priority Goals**

- Install a water filtration system.

Short-Term Goals

- Upgrade utilities to provide each recreational vehicle site with individual water and electricity access.
- Install a safety barrier (fence) between the eastern park boundary and Highway 47.
- Develop additional day-use parking areas.

Long-Term Goals

- Install new water lines throughout the park.
- Expand existing RV sites.
- Reconfigure existing tent sites to accommodate recreational vehicles.
- Upgrade sites to include sewer connections.
- Develop an ADA-accessible footpath surrounding the bathroom facilities.
- Redevelop the playground to meet ADA requirements, including installing ADA-compliant ground materials like soft-fall.
- Upgrade playground equipment by purchasing and installing new items.
- Develop an ADA-compliant footpath from the playground to the roadway.
- Create a footpath and picnic area along the Nehalem River.
- Widen the park's internal road.

- Develop a non-motorized boat launch into the Nehalem River.
- Install kayak and bike racks.

Camp Wilkerson

Priority Goals

- Add vault toilets in each Adirondack area and include a handwashing station with each.
- Place signage along trails.
- Develop additional cabins to encourage year-round park use.

Short-Term Goals

- Address drainage issues throughout the park.
- Improve the water system by replacing the park's well and water pipes.
- Develop a playground area with equipment.
- Create RV spaces within the park.
- Acquire and develop trail access easements to the Crown Z Trail and Scaponia Park for equestrian, bike, and footpaths.

Long-Term Goals

- Redevelop Area 1 to meet ADA requirements, including a parking area and paved access.
- Upgrade water and electrical utilities throughout the park.
- Install bike racks.
- Create backpacking trails and tent sites throughout the park.
- Improve existing day-use trails.
- Replace kitchen appliances in the lodge.
- Replace the lodge foundation.
- Replace the outdated fire truck and its shed.
- Replace the host residence.

- Construct office space adjacent to the host residence.
- Acquire property from the Department of State Forestry at the host facility.
- Post property boundaries.
- Develop a Forest Management Plan for Camp Wilkerson and implement active timber management to ensure timber health and visitor safety.

Hudson-Parcher Park

Priority Goals

- Replace the cabin foundation and protect the exterior from beetles
- Expand day-use parking areas
- Address drainage issues throughout the park

Short-Term Goals

- Replace the vehicular bridge that crosses Beaver Creek
- Pave recreational vehicle parking spurs
- Upgrade playground equipment—purchase and install new equipment
- Re-pave the basketball court—court overlay

Long-Term Goals

- Upgrade restrooms near the host house to meet ADA requirements
- Develop a new restroom facility with showers to serve the north end of the park
- Upgrade utilities (electric, water and sewer) that serve each RV site—provide one-for-one service to each site
- Replace kitchen appliances in the cabin
- Construct additional covered picnic shelters
- Upgrade existing sports fields to regulation size and standards
- Restore vegetation of Beaver Creek—remove invasive species
- Separate the sports groups from the campers—develop a four-plex sports facility

J.J. Collins Memorial Marine Park

Priority Goals

- Replace the toilet on the east side of the island

Short-Term Goals

- Expand and improve overnight camping facilities

- Move existing campsites inland from the banks of the island to minimize the impacts of erosion on the sites

Long-Term Goals

- Construct a cover over the existing, center picnic area
- Construct a covered picnic area on the west side of the island
- Take measures to control erosion of the island
- Improve access for non-motorized boaters
- Install kayak racks

Prescott Beach Park

Priority Goals

- Secure ownership of the property

Short-Term Goals

- Develop full hook-up, overnight RV campsites
- Develop overnight tent campsites
- Develop a restroom facility with showers

Long-Term Goals

- Construct yurts
- Acquire the adjoining 87 acres of wetlands for wildlife viewing, canoeing and recreation (contingent upon acquiring land from P.G.E.)
- Develop a pedestrian/bicycle path within the park and connect Prescott Beach to Trojan Park.
- Create an environmental interpretive trail throughout the park.
- Pave an access road to the park and change the traffic flow of the park
- Develop covered picnic shelters with water and electric
- Upgrade playground equipment—purchase and install new equipment
- Expand day-use parking—and develop parking near the proposed boat launches
- Develop a motorized boat launch and a non-motorized boat launch—located so as not to interfere with fishing areas
- Install kayak and bike racks
- Construct office space adjoining the host residence
- Coordinate with the Oregon State Parks Commission to make Prescott Beach Park a state park

Scappoose R.V. Park

Priority Goals

- Develop additional tent campsites, teepees and/or yurts
- Upgrade playground equipment—purchase and install new equipment
- Develop a day-use parking area

Short-Term Goals

- Install roadside fencing the length of the park

Long-Term Goals

- Develop new full hook-up (water, sewer and electric) RV sites
- Upgrade site utilities—provide one-for-one service to each site
- Replace covered picnic area with a new roof and upgraded electric outlet; and add water and electricity to the airport side of the shelter
- Install a bicycle rack
- Asphalt overlay

Scaponia Park

Priority Goals

- Secure a long-term lease or donation of the entire 90-acre site from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).
- Develop a camp host facility with water, electricity, septic, and a paved parking spur.

Short Term Goals:

- Acquire and develop trail access easements connecting to the Crown Z Trail and Camp Wilkerson Park for equestrian, bike, and footpaths.
- Construct a day-use shelter with electricity and water.

Long-Term Goals:

- Develop a restroom facility with showers.
- Create additional overnight tent campsites.
- Develop equestrian facilities, including parking for horse trailers, horse corals, and tent campsites.
- Upgrade the water supply by installing a new well.
- Install a bicycle rack.

Gilbert River Boat Ramp**Priority Goals**

- Asphalt Overlay

Short-Term Goals

- None (currently)

Long-Term Goals

- Replace the east dock
- Pave the access road
- Expand the parking area
- Place additional picnic tables in the park
- Develop a covered picnic shelter
- Provide water (near the vault toilet) and electricity to the park
- Take measures to control erosion

Undeveloped Parks**Asburry Park****Priority Goals**

- Implement wetland mitigation plan
- Develop a playground area with playground equipment
- Develop a picnic area with a covered picnic shelter (with water and electricity)

Short-Term Goals

- Develop a nature trail throughout the site with interpretive signs about wetlands and wetland restoration

Long-Term Goals

- Develop sports fields (baseball and soccer)

Beaver Falls Park**Priority Goals**

- Develop a parking area
- Develop trails throughout the park, specifically to the lower end of the falls

Short-Term Goals

- Develop a day-use picnic area
- Install a vault toilet

Long-Term Goals

- Remove solid waste (result of illegal dumping) from the site
- Acquire additional property adjacent to the park
- Conduct a feasibility study for further development of the park

Carcus Creek Park**Priority Goals**

- None (currently)

Short-Term Goals

- None (currently)

Long-Term Goals

- Maintain timber harvest plan

Dibblee Beach**Priority Goals**

- Develop a parking area

Short-Term Goals

- Acquiring an extended lease from Department of State Land

Long-Term Goals

- Install a restroom facility
- Develop a non-motorized boat launch
- Develop a day-use picnic area
- Overnight camping

Dibblee Island Park**Priority Goals**

- None (currently)

Short-Term Goals

- None (currently)

Long-Term Goals

- Develop boat launch facilities to meet the needs of non-motorized and small motorized boat users
- Develop primitive, overnight tent campsites
- Install restroom facilities

Fisher Park**Priority Goals**

- Develop a small day-use park to expand recreational capacity within the County park system
- Provide access to Scappoose Creek while protecting natural resources

Short-Term Goals

- Develop a parking area to support public access
- Construct a day-use picnic area with a covered shelter
- Initiate invasive species management and basic site cleanup

Long-Term Goals

- Stabilize and enhance creek banks along Scappoose Creek
- Develop a soft-surface walking trail with viewpoints for wildlife observation, including native turtle habitat
- Expand passive recreation opportunities consistent with the natural setting
- Improvements should be phased to align with available funding and grant opportunities.

Trails**Crown Z Trail****Priority Goals**

- None (currently)

Short-Term Goals

- Assess and repair bridges along the trail, priority for Wilark bridge
- Establish the Crown Z Trail Run and collaborate with partner agencies to support its growth and expansion.
- Work with the City of Scappoose to get interpretive signage and nature signage along the Scappoose segment.

Long Term Goals

- Acquire easements and agreements to connect the Crown Z Trail to the Banks–Vernonia State Trail, creating a seamless regional trail corridor.
- Acquiring easements to connect the Crown Z Trail to Camp Wilkerson, expanding access to overnight recreation and trail-based tourism.
- Explore opportunities to develop and expand designated motorized recreation trails and trail connections on appropriate lands to provide diverse recreational experiences and meet the growing demand for off-highway vehicle use within Columbia County.

Capital Improvement Plan

The Capital Improvement Plan identifies priority projects necessary to maintain, improve, and expand Columbia County's parks and recreation system. These projects are based on system needs, recreation demand, and available funding sources. Project priority will be given to projects that increase system capacity, serve growing population areas, and align with available funding sources.

Cost Estimates

Detailed project cost estimates are not included in this Master Plan. Order-of-magnitude cost estimates for the highest priority projects (Asbury Park Development and Camp Wilkerson Cabin Expansion) will be developed during the design and pre-construction phases as funding opportunities are pursued and site-specific engineering and environmental reviews are completed. Future updates to this Master Plan or the County's Capital Improvement Program will incorporate refined cost information as it becomes available.

Priority Projects

High Priority

Asbury Park Development

- Soccer fields
- Driving range
- Parking and infrastructure

Camp Wilkerson Cabin Development

- New cabins
- ADA-accessible cabins
- Expanded overnight capacity

Medium Priority

Trail Expansion

- Expansion of non-motorized trail systems
- Improved connectivity between parks and communities

Fisher Park development

- A phased opportunity to expand day-use capacity and should be pursued as a phased project as funding becomes available.

Water Access Improvements

- Upgrades to boat launches
- Additional river access points

Ongoing Priority

Maintenance and Rehabilitation

- Repair and replacement of aging facilities
- Upgrades to utilities and infrastructure
- ADA accessibility improvements

Funding Strategy

Implementation of these projects will rely on a combination of funding sources, including:

- User fees and campground revenue
- State and federal grants
- Timber revenue
- Partnerships
- System Development Charges (SDCs)

SDC funding will be used for projects that increase recreational capacity and serve population growth, including the development of Asbury Park.

Implementation Approach

Projects will be implemented in phases based on funding availability and priority level:

- **Short-Term (1–3 Years):** Planning, design, and initial improvements
- **Mid-Term (3–5 Years):** Construction of priority facilities
- **Long-Term (5–10+ Years):** Expansion of amenities and system growth

This phased approach ensures responsible use of resources while allowing the County to respond to changing needs and opportunities.

Implementation Strategy

This Master Plan provides a framework for guiding Columbia County's parks and recreation investments over the next 10–15 years. Implementation of the plan will occur through a phased approach that aligns projects with available funding, community needs, and operational capacity.

Key Implementation Actions

- Prioritize maintenance and improvement of existing facilities
- Advance high-priority capital projects
- Align projects with available funding sources, including grants and System Development Charges (SDCs)
- Revenue generated from the sale of timber on County forest properties can provide a significant source of funding when harvests are feasible and market conditions are favorable. However, timber revenue is inherently unpredictable due to fluctuating markets,

environmental regulations, harvest limitations, and forest health conditions. Because of this uncertainty, it is not considered a reliable source for long-term budgeting or ongoing operational planning.

- Develop partnerships to support recreation opportunities
- Monitor and adjust priorities based on changing needs

Ongoing Review

The County will periodically review and update this Master Plan to reflect changes in population, recreation trends, and funding opportunities. Regular evaluation ensures that the plan remains relevant and responsive to community needs.